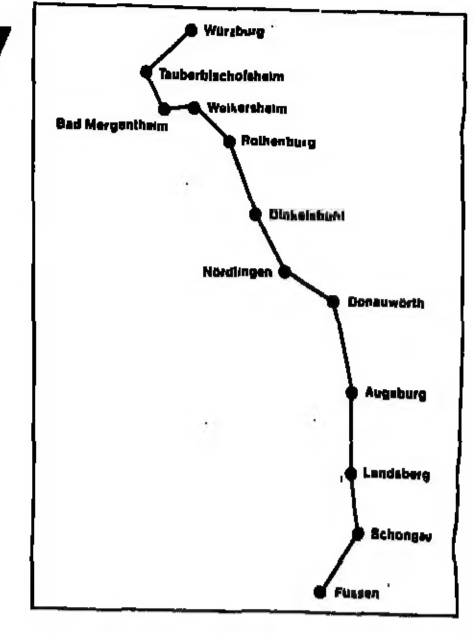
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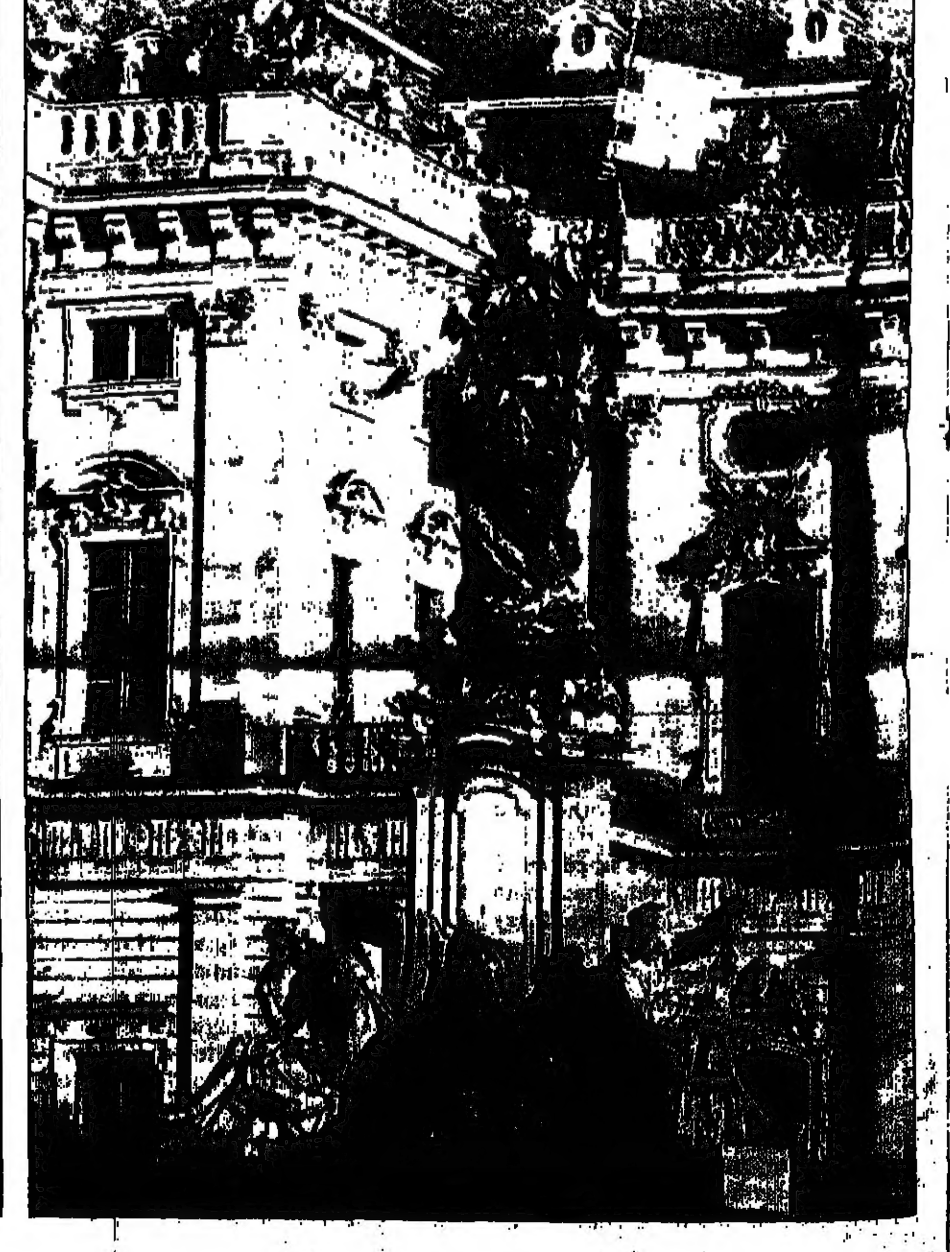
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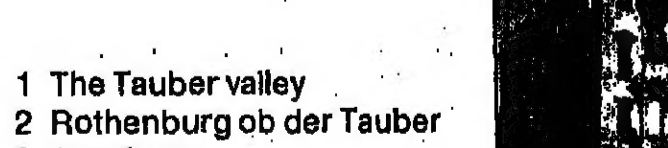








1 The Tauber valley
2 Rothenburg ob der Tauber
3 Augsburg
4 Würzburg



Beethovenstrasse 69, D-6000 Frankfurt/M.

The German Tribune

Hamburg, 25 September 1988
Twenty-seventh year - No. 1340 - By air

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Olympic Gods in the mortal world of politics and money

DIE ZEIT

World history may not be measured in Olympiads, but there are times when the Olympic gods make their mark among mere mortals.

When the Soviet Union announced its intention of boycotting the Los Angeles Olympics in May 1984 it had just shot down KAL 007, the Korean Airlines jumbo jet.

There seemed to be no way in which US and Soviet athletes could possibly be imagined entering the Olympic Stadium side by side four years later. Yet that is what has now happened — in South Korea, of all places.

The drama of what was an international crisis subsided, and the Olympic [illegible] quickly and happily — as it might have forgotten an embarrassing domestic dispute.

There is no longer any question of an Olympic boycott. The fact that Albanian, Cuban, Ethiopian, Nicaraguan, North Korean and Seychelles athletes are not taking part in the 1988 Summer Olympics is regretted.

But regret is accompanied with a shrug of the shoulder, and that is all. For the first time in 12 years the superpowers of world sport are all in attendance, and that is what counts.

IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch may feel in Seoul that he has set the world to rights, but world affairs have undoubtedly, and gratifyingly, lent a helping hand.

Sport does not live in splendid isolation no matter how much its officials and administrators may at times claim "pure as the driven snow" innocence.

When the IOC general meeting decided in 1981, just after the Moscow Games, to hold the 1984 Games in Los Angeles and the 1988 Games in Seoul, it looked as though [illegible] might well have really put its foot in it.

It can now claim to have accelerated and stabilised the process of democratisation in South Korea, inadvertently but to some effect, by awarding the 1988 Games to Seoul.

It can claim to have been even more successful because the fires of enthusiasm for a politically motivated Olympic boycott seem to have died down and would hardly have been fanned even if they were now fuelled.

Countries that have backed past boycotts have felt none the better for it and no longer see the boycott as a useful weapon. The power of the Olympic idea has prevailed.

No matter how you define it, it has attracted over 10,000 athletes and 15,000 journalists to Seoul, with competitors from a record 161 countries. So the Olympic Games continues to grow unhampered, and that, after the crises and irritations of the past few years, these games are an amazing development.

The Olympic hydra, so often pronounced dead, has sprouted even more and bigger heads.

Surely, you may ask, the Games bear the hallmark of all the world's evils; are they not intolerably politicised, professionalised and commercialised? They are indeed.

Why, then, do they continue to exercise such an unbroken fascination? Why do we all tune in to the Games? The answer is simple: because they are there.

The shortcomings of the Olympic Games are not diseases born of the Olympic idea; they are the very circumstances in which they are held.

Pierre de Coubertin himself is definitely felt by sport historians and educationists to have sown the seeds of what is now growing so luxuriantly.

Top-flight athletics today has little or nothing in common with what he resurrected on the basis of the Ancient Greek Games, in keeping with his liberal arts education.

Yet he cannot be said to have been totally misunderstood, nor can the way the Olympic Games have developed be said to have been totally out of keeping with what the Baron had in mind.

Developments have been entirely in accordance with the Olympic comparative he himself coined: *citius, altius, fortius* — faster, higher, further.

Coubertin himself was partly to blame. Such are the ironies of sporting history.

Convinced of the beneficial influence sport had on the education of young people, he saw it as a means of building personality and of practising democratic togetherness.

Yet togetherness contains the seeds of contest and competition. The urge to be faster, better and stronger than the rest is only natural and where measurements are taken or times are recorded, records will be broken.

Whenever we think of the seamier side of modern competitive sport we would do well to remember that the excesses of the preoccupation with records that we deplore originated in the Olympic idea and are only indirectly due to the blandishments of world affairs and big business.

There once was a time when talent was enough to ensure success. Then regular and steadily more intensive training became indispensable.

Science and technology made further contributions toward the addiction to records, and we have now reached the point at which, in many disciplines, the limits of physical achievement have been reached and physical manipulation is the only way of improving on what is, in principle, the best of which the human body is capable.

This manipulation of human nature is unquestionably the worst evil of which top-flight sport is possessed. Athletes may go ahead with it fully aware of the risks they are running, but that in no way validates the unscrupulous way in which health is invested in what, hopefully, may prove a successful sporting career.

There is, one is bound to admit, an irreconcilable clash of interests here for all ambitious athletes. Those who abide strictly by the ethics can wave goodbye to medal hopes. In most disciplines Olympic medallists and world champions invariably rely on chemical boosters.

A former leading British athlete who knows what he is talking about recently said that at least two out of three medal-winners in every discipline at Seoul would have taken anabolic steroids during their preparations for the Games.

More effective analysis techniques and more frequent drug tests have failed to stem the tide. Many sports associations refuse to seriously combat the use of body-building pills.

There are sufficient grounds for suspecting that many athletes take prohibited drugs with the connivance of their associations and sports doctors.

Sport in its bright colours has an inhuman face when it goes to such extremes, but it alone is not to blame. Sport is a reflection of society.

Quite apart from his personal motivation, the athlete is constantly confronted with the more or less clearly voiced public expectation that he will win events and bring home medals more or less irrespective of whatever that may entail.

No-one has yet been sent a greetings telegram or otherwise honoured for having refused on ethical or sporting grounds to accept a medal because he felt the means and methods that winning it required were no longer acceptable.

Top-flight Olympic athletics in particular has reached absolute limits. As far as can be forseen, some field and track records will soon be unbeatable. Unless, that is, athletes are cloned and specially bred.

Genetic engineering makes this an Olympic possibility, and it will be an increasingly tempting prospect once intensive training, early talent-spotting and conventional medical and scientific aids have been used to the full and no longer achieve results in the form of fresh records.

In Seoul the Olympic Games have been thrown open to professionalism of almost all kinds. That is no more than in keeping with the trends and can no longer even be termed revolutionary. In

Continued on page 2

Humour at the White House

Nato Secretary General Manfred Wörner (right) with President Reagan at the White House, Washington. The two held wide-ranging talks. (Photo: dpa)

IN THIS ISSUE

■ WORLD AFFAIRS

Iraq's campaign against Kurds raises doubts about regional power balance

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

The British government said accusations that Iraq had used chemical weapons against Kurdish rebels must be checked carefully, but US Secretary of State George Shultz said in Washington that the United States had proof.

That could have serious repercussions on relations between Washington and Baghdad.

The US Senate, which has just met for the last time before the Presidential elections, passed a resolution calling on President Reagan to impose economic sanctions on Iraq.

Now the Iraqi government has officially admitted that it used poison gas in the Gulf War, it is hard to believe assurances that none has been used against the Kurds.

The operations against the Kurds in northern Iraq — heedless of the civilian population — have been going down badly in international public opinion.

The resolution approved by the US Senate shows how fast Iraq's international standing has deteriorated since it felt able to celebrate Iran's agreement to an armistice as a famous victory.

Yet it was a foregone conclusion that the Iraqi regime would resume its operations against the Kurds once the fighting with Iran was over.

The Kurds, in a struggle for self-government they are waging against Turkey and Iran as well as Iraq, had sided with Iran as Baghdad's Gulf War adversary.

They drove Iraqi forces out of borders areas in the north and threatened to raid oil wells and refineries in Mosul and Kirkuk. They played for high stakes and it was clear as soon as Gulf War armistice terms were agreed that they had lost again. The Iraqi army now had a free hand and was in a position to restore Baghdad's writ in the Kurdish border areas.

It was the way in which these operations were conducted, as a campaign of vengeance against the entire Kurdish people, that brought Iraq into discredit.

A contributory factor was, undeniably, that Baghdad felt the Kurds had betrayed it yet again, having accepted military aid from Teheran in the Shah's days too.

In return for cutting off aid to the Kurds the Shah demanded — and got — a new international frontier between Iran and Iraq in the Shatt el-Arab.

That is the very border Iraq is now disputing at the armistice negotiations in Geneva.

These negotiations are marking time. When they began the Iraqi regime seemed to be in a strong position. It was, for instance, soon able to force Teheran to agree to direct negotiations.

But Iraq's position has since deteriorated, and if it were to be isolated internationally on account of the way it has dealt with the Kurds that would have an immediate effect on the armistice negotiations. Besides, Baghdad has clearly overestimated its position. Not even the Gulf states that backed it in its war with Teheran want to see Iraq emerge as the major military power in the region, with corresponding claims to hegemony.

They want, if possible, to improve their relations with Teheran so as to protect themselves from ideological attacks by Iranian-style Islamic fundamentalists.

In other words, they want a balanced peace in the Gulf, and this partly accounts for the way in which other countries, such as Saudi Arabia, are arming themselves to the teeth now the Gulf War is over.

They want to protect themselves from both Teheran's claims and Baghdad's status as a military power. It will be interesting to see how they react now Iraq is gradually being isolated.

Baghdad has also misread Western interests. Even countries which, like France, backed Baghdad during the Gulf War by supplying arms on easy terms are keen to resume normal relations with Teheran too.

Since the armistice many countries have offered the Iranians their services in the reconstruction of their partly ruined infrastructure.

Japan underlines its economic potential. France has resumed full diplomatic ties with Teheran, and Britain is preparing to follow suit. Even the United States is cautiously aiming at fresh ties with Teheran.

All these pointers ought to have warned Iraq not to overrate its position, especially as it too needs further international aid to repair the serious damage done by the war.

It is, for that matter, hard to see why Baghdad has paid such scant heed to its immediate neighbours.

During the Gulf War Turkey lent Baghdad support against the Kurds. Turkish troops operated in Iraqi territory, allegedly in hot pursuit, and thereby backed Iraqi military operations against the Kurdish rebels.

The present Iraqi operations against the Kurds have sent thousands of Kurds over the border to seek refuge in Turkey, where Kurdish refugees are the last thing Ankara wants, given the trouble it has with its own Kurds.

Solving your own problems by adding to your neighbour's is hardly a token of good neighbourliness. Baghdad has sought to undo the damage, but probably to no avail, by offering Kurdish refugees amnesty terms.

The damage that may be done to the Geneva armistice talks weighs even more heavily. The UN mediator in Geneva faces a tough task as it is.

He has so far worked on the assumption that neither belligerent must feel unacceptable terms are being forced upon him in implementing the armistice and, later, in holding peace talks.

If one side were to gain the impression that the other is in a weaker position internationally it would be tempted to sound a more menacing note. That would make agreement even more difficult and might even run the risk of a resumption of hostilities.

At all events it is even harder now than when the armistice agreement was reached to assess how the balance of power is likely to develop in the region.

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 11 September 1988)

The Olympics

Continued from page 1

readmitting tennis, arguably the most professionalised and commercialised sport there is, as an Olympic discipline the IOC has at least testified to a professional approach in this respect.

Advocates of sporting "purity" may feel the "open" Olympics are a thorn in the flesh, but there is no call for nostalgia.

The amateur ideal was always a white lie and anyone who feels the Olympics today could be run in any other way is harbouring an illusion.

Olympic Games along the lines of a generation or two ago would be of no interest whatever to either the media or the general public and would, accordingly, not be held.

Not even the athletes in Ancient Greece were pure amateurs, and the peace-promoting mission of the Olympic Games was wishful thinking. So even historically speaking there is no need to be ashamed of today's Games.

As far as can be seen the Olympics are an international exhibition of athletic prowess demonstrated by full-time athletes as part of the entertainment industry.

There is no reason for not enjoying the spectacle — as long as the entertainers go about their business in accordance with the principles of honest and above-board businessmen or, for that matter, "straight" professionals.

Aloys Behler

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 16 September 1988)

Nirvana waits as Burma deals with the present

Burma has parted company with an era of quiet sufferance and of the three Buddhist truths that all is suffering, nothing is lasting and only nirvana brings salvation.

The country has decided to concentrate on the here and now rather than the hereafter. Not because it has set aside its religious ethic; few peoples are more religious than Burmese Buddhists. But in the interest of sheer survival.

In comparison with the poverty into which Burma has been plunged by its autocratic rulers, even India seems like a land of milk and honey.

The popular uprising has gained an irresistible momentum. It is hard to say where it will end. But anarchy, chaos and civil war seem likelier than a peaceful transition to freedom and democracy.

The Burmese may be agreed in wanting to see the back of Ne Win's regime and consider national alternatives, but signs of the Burmese problem of old — disunity, rivalry and contradictions — are already apparent.

They broke the back of the last civilian government, headed by U Nu, nearly 30 years ago and paved the way for the military takeover by General Ne Win.

Have U Nu, now in his 80s, and his political associates, all in their 70s, so lost sight of reality that they feel able to set up a parallel government yet are unable to see that unity, and nothing else, counts?

Two presidents, two heads of government and two election deadlines are bad enough, but it is downright dangerous to exclude the two Opposition idols ex-General Aung Gyi and Suu Kyi, the 43-year-old daughter of Aung San, the father of the nation, from the alternative government.

Ruling out Tin Oo as parallel Defence Minister would, if this news report is true, be utterly suicidal.

A former general who was long seen as Ne Win's heir-apparent but fell into disfavour because he grew too powerful, Tin Oo is the only Opposition leader with any influence on the crucially important armed forces.

Whether, as he claims, two thirds of the armed forces support him is a moot point, but the growing number of deserters who have taken part in demonstrations by students and the general public show that the authorities can no longer rely on the armed forces.

So does the growing uncertainty in the forces about the best strategy to pursue.

The army, which has enjoyed the privileges bestowed on it by a single-party state, holds the key to war and peace. The attitude it takes will decide whether there is a controlled transition to a multi-party system.

The Burmese say: "If the army and the people join forces, the sun will shine on us." They know that they may be able to oust individuals but are powerless against the armed forces.

If Burma were to succeed in embarking on a fresh start it would be worthless without a reconciliation between the 70 per cent of Burmese and the national minorities — the Karen, Shan, Mon, Chin and so on.

A fresh start presupposes striking the federative balance that has so far existed only on paper.

The Burmese example of a people demanding their rights and freedoms is being cited all over Asia as a warning to the powers that be: in Pakistan, in northern Sri Lanka and in Vietnam.

People's power, the potential of the streets, has emerged as a sign that change is possible even in what may appear to be a hopeless situation.

But the Philippines have shown what a dangerous tight-rope act people's power can trigger. There is no way of telling whether Burma will come a cropper before it even ascends the high wire.

Gabriele Venzky

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 15 September 1988)

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■ HOSTAGE RELEASED

After 605 days, Rudolf Cordes comes home

Rudolf Cordes flew back to Beirut from his Christmas leave in Germany on 17 January 1987. He was due to go back to work as an executive of the Hoechst chemicals company in the Lebanese capital.

We may never know why he flew straight to Beirut, knowing full well that the international airport is in a Shi'ite part of the city, rather than flying to Damascus and then transferring to Christian East Beirut.

Back home in Fischbach the 53-year-old manager may have wanted to enjoy his leave until the last moment and to pay no attention to newspaper reports four days before he flew back to Beirut that Lebanese hijacker Mohammed Hammadi had been arrested at Frankfurt airport.

Eighteen months earlier Hammadi had hijacked a TWA airliner, killing an American passenger and securing the release of hundreds of fellow-Shi'ites from Israeli prisons.

His brother Abdel Hadi Hammadi was military leader of the Hizbollah, the pro-Iranian Shi'ite "Party of God."

Another brother, Abbas Hammadi, was arrested on 26 January 1987 and later identified as a kidnapper of Rudolf Cordes and Siemens engineer Alfred Schmidt.

From the moment he was held hostage in Shi'ite people's prisons in Beirut Cordes' fate was inseparably interlinked with that of the Hammadi brothers.

Like so many other hostages taken in Lebanon, he vanished en route from the airport, in southern Beirut, to the residential and business area in the north of the city.

A few weeks after his abduction a Lebanese government security expert said he had been taken shortly afterwards to the infamous al-Basta al-Tahta prison, a Hizbollah jail near the Green Line that separates Christian East Beirut from Muslim West Beirut.

His prison is merely a dilapidated tenement house with a prayer room upstairs and prison cells in the underground garage. It is an example of the bizarre world of the civil war-torn city.

That evening a German-Lebanese businessman received a mysterious invitation to call at a house in Beirut where he was shown proof of who was holding Cordes hostage. Abdel Hadi Hammadi *handed him* Cordes' passport.

The kidnappers [illegible] him that where Cordes and Schmidt were concerned they were not intent on political revenge.

This might be the case in respect of US or French hostages, but in return for Cordes and Schmidt they "merely" wanted to secure the release of their brothers held in custody in Germany and facing charges before a German court.

Eight months after their abduction the two hostages were allowed to provide the first proof that they were still alive.

On 25 August 1987, Islamic New Year's Day, a videotape recording was released in which Schmidt called on the Bonn government to "seriously consider" releasing Mohammed Hammadi "to make our release, an urgent necessity, possible."

This videotape was entirely in keeping with classic but absurd drama. Schmidt, 47, read the text prepared by his jailers like a political prisoner sentenced according to "people's law" of some kind or other, but in reality a judicial farce in which the victim was made out to be the offender.

That is humiliating and far from being the worst that hostages often have to endure in the years in which they are held prisoner in Lebanon. Almost daily they go through a dreadful cat-and-mouse game on the brink of physical and mental breakdown.

In three years French hostages changed jails 18 times, each time hoping they might be released and fearing they might be due for "execution."

Months afterwards hostages have nightmares about the whims of their jailers, including physical assault and even sham executions as an everyday event.

"All the time I had no idea what was going on in the world," says Schmidt, who was released on 7 September 1987.

"Rudolf Cordes and I had no newspapers and were not allowed to listen to the radio or to see TV newscasts. We knew nothing about the Hammadi case."

Yet compared with others, Schmidt and Cordes fared reasonably well in jail. "We soon realised that they didn't hate us personally. We were merely bargaining points, not enemies."

French hostage Michel Seurat, who died of cancer while held hostage, was another matter. He was an Arabist and sociologist married to a Lebanese woman. He was treated as a spy and secret agent.

Another French hostage, Jean-Paul Kauffmann, was originally imagined by his captors to be a Jew on account of his name.

Journalist Alec Colett, abducted in March 1985, is presumed dead, although his corpse was never found.

Schmidt was the last person other than their captors who is known to have seen Cordes. "I had only a moment in which to shake hands with Rudolf," he says. "Then I was frog-marched out."

Cordes remained a prisoner of the "Party of God" for over another year.

Beirut newspapers reported that DM5m was paid in ransom to secure Schmidt's release. Last August, when there were signs that Cordes' release might be imminent and he was allowed to write to his wife and to the Bonn government, Defence Minister Tlass of Syria said Hoechst had offered to pay DM18m in ransom money.

This claim has constantly been strenuously denied, first by the Bonn government, then by Abdelkader Sahraoui, an Algerian-born German passport-holder who served as an intermediary for several months.

He recently claimed that he had insisted on two points in his negotiations with the kidnappers. There was to be no ransom money and no arms shipments. After Cordes' release he continued to insist that no ransom payments had been made.

When the French government flew the last three French hostages home last May, national jubilation was constantly tempered by the question: "What price did we have to pay?"

France didn't pay in cash, it paid a

Continued on page 4

DIE ZEIT

Minister says no conditions were agreed with captors



Why did he go direct to Beirut? ... Rudolf Cordes re-united with his wife. (Photo: dpa)

What price was paid, what terms were agreed to secure Rudolf Cordes' release after 605 days as a terrorist hostage?

Maybe the moral of the tale is that German statesmanship has won the day, in which case Hans-Dietrich Genscher and Wolfgang Schäuble deserve much of the credit.

Herr Genscher is Foreign Minister, while Herr Schäuble, as Minister of State at the Chancellor's Office, headed the group of Bonn government officials set up to monitor and handle the case.

Herr Genscher says no conditions were accepted or fulfilled. If that is true, the government deserves both praise and respect.

Other countries in similar situations have preached a hard-line approach and then climbed down.

The Italians allowed the terrorist in charge of hijacking the *Achille Lauro* to escape. After weeks of terrorist bomb raids in Paris the French came to a deal on arms with terrorists in Damascus.

And while Washington vilified Khomeini as the world's leading state terrorist, US negotiators were busy securing the release of American hostages, bearing Bibles and cakes in one hand and arms deals in the other.

But in Bonn everyone involved seems to have kept a cool head and steady nerves despite the brutal pressure.

On 13 January 1987 Mohammed Hammadi was arrested at Frankfurt airport. A week later Alfred Schmidt of Siemens and Rudolf Cordes of Hoechst were taken hostage in Lebanon.

Herr Cordes was taken prisoner to have a hostage in hand, but Hammadi's brother Abbas was arrested on arriving in the Federal Republic on 26 January.

The only concession so far apparent was made in June 1987 when Mohammed Hammadi was not handed over to the Americans, who wanted to try him on charges of hijacking and murder.

In all other respects Bonn remained true — heedless of catcalls — to the principle of not rewarding terrorism by falling on bended knees.

Last April Abbas Hammadi was not found guilty on a minor count and deported; he was sentenced to 13 years for hostage-taking.

His brother Mohammed is still on trial in Frankfurt, charged with murder.

Was the happy end of the hostage saga good luck or good management? As Machiavelli put it, fortune only favours the brave, and in view of the pressure Bonn has proved its staying-power, more so than many another government.

Yet good management in diplomacy calls for more than sheer stamina. Discretion and patience must be maintained in pursuing one's interests, and favourable moments must be used to the full.

The basic approach of Bonn's policy toward Teheran and Damascus, which has played a crucial role for better (as in this case) and for worse, was a classic medium-sized power strategy.

Best use was discreetly made of a slight advantage Germany held over America, Britain and France.

The great powers had the balance of power in the Gulf War constantly in mind and increasingly appeared to be supporting Iraq, long the weaker of the two belligerents.

Bonn, and Foreign Minister Genscher especially, pursued a policy of benevolent neutrality toward Iran.

Others might send warships to the Gulf, but he forged links with Teheran, refused to agree to sanctions and would not condemn the Khomeini regime in a number of UN debates.

Bonn was able to pave the way for the successful outcome of its negotiations to secure the release of German hostages in Lebanon by putting this approach to good use, an approach in keeping with the classical continuity of German policy toward Teheran since Weimar.

All that remained was to await a convenient opportunity that could not be of Bonn's making. It came when Damascus and Teheran brought massive pressure to bear on their Lebanese henchmen.

They would hardly have done so had not Iran and Syria lost the upper hand in the Gulf War, due to no small extent to the influence brought to bear by the great powers.

Teheran's loss was Bonn's gain. Humiliated and economically ruined, Syria and Iran are well-nigh despairingly seeking fresh friends in the West, especially as the war is not really over and any further move by Iraq could spell disaster for Iran.

So it was only logical for the losers to curry Bonn's favour and start waving the olive branch last summer.

The Hammadi clan and their fellow-terrorists in Lebanon, long a useful tool, were forced by raison d'état to knuckle under.

So it seems reasonable to assume that no ransom was paid. What Teheran and Damascus expect in return is neither cash nor clemency toward the Hammadi brothers.

Bonn is to open doors in the West, to lend diplomatic assistance against Iraq and to help with economic reconstruction.

That need not be the wrong approach in view of Iraq, armed to the teeth, being so jubilant at having prevailed.

It would be the right approach regardless of the release of the German hostages. Yet a bitter taste remains. For years Syria and Iran have advocated and promoted terrorism.

Forced by defeat to review their position, they must not be forgotten as the masterminds behind the terrorists who still hold a further 15 hostages.

Josef Joffe

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 14 September 1988)

■ POLITICS

Hamburg's odd couple resist separation

The strongest bond between the Social and Free Democrats after a year in coalition in Hamburg is the lack of coalition alternatives.

The number and intensity of crisis sessions, which used to be held with what can only be described as a delight in self-destruction, has declined substantially.

Differences of opinion between the SPD and the FDP on matters of principle still exist, but the two parties have learnt the hard way how to live with them.

Views on how the coalition has acquitted itself over the past year are correspondingly pragmatic. Its greatest success is that it still exists and that there is a growing conviction that it will survive until the end of the four-year legislative term.

The threatening gestures the two parties used to make, verging on slapstick, have become more normal.

As Traute Müller, the newly-elected Hamburg SPD leader, puts it: "The greatest success is that the coalition is working and has solved tough problems."

FDP leader Robert Vogel agrees, saying that: "On the whole we can't complain. The coalition is of great interest both for Hamburg and nationally."

This is a reference to the fact that in Bonn and elsewhere the Free Democrats are in coalition with Chancellor Kohl's Christian Democrats.

The Hamburg line-up is the first SPD/FDP coalition since 1982. The Social Democrats led coalitions with the FDP in Bonn for more than 13 years with Chancellors Willy Brandt and Helmut Schmidt.

Much more than a working relationship can hardly be expected of a coalition which hated the idea. The election results forced them..

A further problem this year has been the resignation of SPD Mayor Klaus von Dohnanyi, the change-over to Henning Voscherau, his successor, and a substantial Senate reshuffle.

Free Democrats are fond of pointing out that they have been a factor for continuity throughout this "crisis of government within the SPD." Time is now short and progress must be made on joint projects, they add.

Priority here is a project on which the parties disagree: the purchase of 41,600 houses and flats from Neue Heimat, the hard-hit trade union-owned housing group.

The coalition has almost come apart at the seams on the small print of this in the past, and matters do not appear to have been simplified by refererence to another panel of experts.

The FDP says terms were agreed in May and thinks new negotiations are a waste of time. The SPD seems prepared to try again.

Herr Vogel feels that might really put the cat among the pigeons. Reopening negotiations would not be worthwhile and Neue Heimat's Heinz Sippel is barking up the wrong tree in hoping better terms might be agreed.

Yet no-one seriously believes the first SPD-FDP coalition since the Free Democrats switched allegiance to the CDU/CSU in Bonn in October 1982 will founder on the Neue Heimat purchase.

But the partners will continue to drive hard bargains with each other on this and all other major issues.

The climate of coalition relations has been outwardly unchanged since Dr Voscherau took over as mayor, but the signs are that the going is tougher.

Voscherau has always felt that his predecessor was at times too compliant in his dealings with the FDP.

FDP Senators Ingo von Münch (Deputy Mayor, the Arts) and Wilhelm Rahlfs (Economic Affairs) will need to be more careful. Von Dohnanyi tried to make sure they made no serious mistakes; Voscherau seems to relish the idea of cocking a snook at the FDP now and then.

Even so, the two parties get on well together, especially at the practical, parliamentary-party level, as the two parliamentary party leaders, the SPD's Paul Busse and the FDP's Frank-Michael Wiegand, readily agree.

As Economic Affairs Senator can show Hamburg's gross domestic product to have regained momentum and unemployment to be steadily declining from the 100,000-mark, one might well conclude that the SPD-FDP coalition has, by and large, served Hamburg well, especially in comparison with the previous state of affairs. The previous state of affairs was SPD minority rule and fruitless negotiations with the Alternatives (GAL), a New Left, ecological party that held the balance of power.

The present coalition can certainly be said to have done well once the Neue Heimat deal is signed, sealed and delivered and peace and quiet have been restored at the Hafenstrasse squat.

Mayor Dohnanyi negotiated last-minute terms with the squatters last November, averting almost certain bloodshed, but views differ on whether he was right to do so — both in Hamburg and among the city's Social Democrats.

Opinions voiced at a recent entrepreneurial symposium on the future of the coastal region as a business and industrial location showed yet again what a dim view potential investors take of the Hafenstrasse squat.

Wolfgang H. Schmidt

(Handelsblatt, Dusseldorf, 5 September 1988)

Stoltenberg grabs his chance and comes out on top

Finance Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg has hardly had a better opportunity this year of presenting his 1989 budget to the Bonn Bundestag.

Superb economic statistics, unexpectedly high Bundesbank profits, unexpectedly higher tax revenue and an Opposition SPD minus it best economics spokesman all went towards defusing many of Herr Stoltenberg's problems. (Hans Apel, a former Finance and Defence Minister in Social Democrat governments, resigned after the party conference this month).

They include the Barschel affair, the vagaries of fiscal policy and the slings and arrows of monetary trends.

His performance regained Herr Stoltenberg, nicknamed "the cool, clear northerner," much of his reputation.

After long having been hard-pressed by calls to resign and speculation about resignation, he shone even more brightly in the Bundestag debate because of the lack of an Opposition finance policy spokesman who could match for him.

Favourable economic statistics for the first half of 1988 had just been released. A growth rate of 3.9 per cent is impressive.

Noting that it was the best since 1979, Herr Stoltenberg had little difficulty in silencing critics.

The latest figures indicate that the second half will be no worse, so the growth rate for the full year is virtually bound to exceed three per cent, which would be the second-best this decade (the 1984 growth rate was 3.3 per cent).

The Finance Minister and the Bonn coalition have reason to be satisfied. The pundits' New Year forecasts were a growth rate of less than two per cent.

Why this unexpectedly strong economic upsurge? It isn't due to the weather, as some liked to argue. The government cannot convincingly claim that the state of the economy is entirely its doing.

An opinion poll would probably find that at least as many people feel it is in spite of government policy and not because of it.

That isn't to denigrate the Christian and Free Democrats and their economic and financial policies. Tax cuts have given consumer spending a lasting boost.

The fight against inflation has also paid dividends while, last but not least, the state of the economy has benefited from 130,000 new jobs created in the first quarter of 1988.

But the coalition can thank its lucky stars that the political turmoil for which it has been to blame has not affected the economic situation.

The continued high level of unemployment would alone have been sufficient to cast a shadow on the economic outlook, while both the bickering over tax reform proposals and the increases in indirect taxation agreed before the summer recess could have dented consumer demand.

The heated debate about the Federal Republic as an industrial location is a clear sign of how easily industry might be prompted by dissatisfaction with the government to cut investment.

Luckily, this has not happened. Instead, investment has increased fast

Like all successes, the state of the economy is due to many factors. They include both the government and, say, the two sides of industry.

Unions and management have con-

Continued on page 5

Hostage Cordes released

Continued from page 3

political price. The anti-Khomeini People's Mujaheddin were expelled from France, French debts to Iran outstanding from the Shah's days were repaid and an Iranian who was reputed to be a terrorist mastermind was allowed to leave France.

In comparison with this price even the DM5m paid to secure Schmidt's release was a modest sum.

If cash had counted in Cordes' case he could long have been back home. But his release was the result not of an agreed ransom sum but of a favourable political constellation.

Moderates are coming to the forę in Iran and steadily reducing the leeway of pro-Iranian militias in Beirut.

As in the case of the French hostages, the factors that worked in his favour were a combination of Iranian influence on the Hizbollah and the Syrian presence in Lebanon.

Hours after the Hoechst manager's release German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher divulged "the best-kept secret in Bonn." Since 24 August, he said, he had known the exact day on which Cordes was to be released.

Herr Genscher had met Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Laridjani on 15 August and was told Cordes was to be released in a few weeks.

On 23 August Syrian authorities said secret talks about a release had broken down. But this just showed Syrian dissatisfaction: Damascus was evidently afraid that Germans and Persians might agree, over its head in Syrian-occupied Lebanon.

A day later this problem was evidently resolved. Syria became a party to the deal and Mr Laridjani was able to tell Herr Genscher the date of release.

"We are in the middle of a hot phase," intermediary Sahraoui said in a hopeful mid-August interview.

At this point the link between Cordes and Mohammed Hammadi seems to have been cut. The Hammadi clan in Beirut seem to have agreed to release their hostage before damning evidence was given against Mohammed Hammadi in his Frankfurt court.

Even more importantly, they kept to their part of the bargain even after the TWA pilot had told the court that Hammadi was not only one of the hijackers but also the killer of a US passenger on board the hijacked airliner.

But the court proceedings no longer counted in connection with the happy end of the Cordes case. As Mohammed Hammadi was returned to custody from the Frankfurt courtroom Rudolf Cordes was released in Beirut.

He was released in a southern suburb, knocked at the nearest door, asked to use the telephone and rang the police.

He spent a brief moment at the Lebanese Interior Ministry, where Syrian officials were waiting with a car to take him to Damascus and safety. His ordeal was over after 605 days.

Was it really? "He seemed to me like an ordinary German visitor," said a relieved Syrian Interior Minister.

Cordes, now 55, may have looked healthy and in good condition. But freedom is sure to have come as a shock, just as it has done for many other hostages.

French psychiatrist Louis Crocq, a specialist in treating terrorist victims, has described the shock of freedom as follows: "At the moment of their release I have seen many hostages show signs verging on depersonalisation, or loss of personality."

As another former Lebanese hostage puts it: "You have so much on your mind and have been through so much that you simply have to open up to someone and tell them what it was all like."

Cordes has escaped by the skin of his teeth, but the 20 months he spent in custody will have left their mark.

He is the last German hostage in Lebanon to be released, but a further 16 foreigners are presumed still to be held by the Hizbollah, not to mention hundreds of unknown Lebanese victims of abduction.

Joachim Fritz-Vannahme

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 16 September 1988)

■ PERSPECTIVE

Bundeswehr image suffers in widening ramifications of air-show disaster

The Ramstein air show accident, in which the death toll is 65 and still rising, has taken just two weeks to become a lot more than a tragedy at an event under American authority at a US Air Force base.

It has touched on German domestic politics and has the potential to touch on foreign and security policies as well.

The Bundestag defence committee met in a special session to hear Defence Minister Rupert Scholz and Luftwaffe inspector Lt-Gen. Jungkurth report on the measures taken after the accident.

Hardly had the session begun when it was announced that the Social Democrats had decided to apply for a commission of inquiry to be appointed to look into the affair.

It will deal not only with the Ramstein accident but with what went on that same evening at Nörvenich air base, home of the Luftwaffe's 31 Fighter Bomber Squadron.

It was here that another air show was held the same day as Ramstein and, in the evening, officers decided to go ahead with a dinner-dance in spite of the tragedy.

Herr Scholz had issued his first instructions that evening, cancelling another air show planned for later this month.

The following day he flew to Ramstein with the Italian and US ambassadors and told journalists that aerobatics

Frankfurter Allgemeine

and formation flying were banned for good at military air shows; and that no military air shows were to be held until further notice.

US ambassador Richard Burt and General Kirk, European C-in-C of the US Air Force, were reluctant to accept the idea because it meant cancelling another American air show, but they did.

Herr Scholz also outlined the legal situation, which entitles the Allies not only to hold army and air force manoeuvres for their forces stationed in Germany; they are also entitled to stage air shows such as Ramstein largely on their own responsibility.

German authorities can only intervene when air shows are to be held at the weekend or if air safety is not ensured.

They are not entitled to check the programme or the safety measures at an American air show in Germany. That, by Nato treaty terms, is the sole right and responsibility of the United States.

In short, Herr Scholz had did what he could to protect himself from political attacks by the Opposition and from suspicions of having neglected his duties.

Yet that did him and the Bundeswehr little if any good, especially as a fresh aspect had emerged that does not deserve to be mentioned in the same breath as the toll the Ramstein accident took — but that had no bearing on the domestic political dispute.

At Nörvenich the Luftwaffe's 31 Squadron had held an air show of its own on the same day as the Ramstein disaster. There were no accidents.

Yet while the Luftwaffe pilots performed their aerial acrobatics faultlessly, decisions were taken on the ground that Luftwaffe inspector Lt-Gen. Jungkurth, after a thorough review of the situation, to this day feels were inexplicable.

31 Squadron held an open day to mark its 30th anniversary. The public were to be given a demonstration of Luftwaffe pilots' skills. Everything went off to the full satisfaction of all concerned.

The Nörvenich air show was attended by the squadron's commanding officer, Col. Hoppe, the commanding officer of the Luftwaffe's 3 Div, Maj.-Gen. Rimmek, the deputy commander of the Luftwaffe, Maj.-Gen. Vieth, and the head of the Luftwaffe Office, Lt-Gen. Schmitz.

Thousands of enthusiastic visitors from near and far were there to see the show.

The assembled Luftwaffe officers at Nörvenich heard the first news of the Ramstein accident just after 4 p.m. on Sunday 28 August. This marked the beginning of a series of events for which Lt-Gen. Jungkurth still has no plausible explanation.

First, at 16.08 hours, the two highest-ranking Luftwaffe officers at Nörvenich, Maj.-Gen. Vieth and Lt-Gen. Schmitz, were helicoptered home and paid no further part in the proceedings.

They didn't even see fit to ring Luftwaffe inspector General Jungkurth, who was at home on the last day of his holidays, to brief him on the situation.

He was informed about the accident at 6 p.m. by the air safety duty officer at the Luftwaffe general staff.

By this time Defence Minister Scholz, who was first notified at 4.55 p.m. and briefed by his spokesman, Col. Dunkel, on the full extent of the accident, was already considering the consequences.

Yet at Nörvenich the air show continued. Forty minutes later it ended on schedule, with no accidents having happened.

After the air show a dinner and dance was planned for 31 Squadron personnel, their families and invited guests. It too went ahead. No-one protested. Officers, NCOs, other ranks and civilians, everyone took part in the festivities. Col. Hoppe, the squadron's commanding officer, conferred with his immediate superior, Maj.-Gen. Rimmek. They agreed to go ahead with the dinner and dance regardless of Ramstein.

The band played, the dancing began. At 10.30 p.m. a minute's silence was observed as a token of respect for the Ramstein victims. The ball then continued until well after midnight.

A fortnight later General Jungkurth was still at a loss to understand how Maj.-Gen. Rimmek and Col. Hoppe could possibly have decided to go ahead with the ball.

"I ordered an investigation as soon as it was clear what had happened there," he says, trying hard not to admit that the first he had heard of the Nörvenich air show dinner dance had been a TV report the following Wednesday.

Yet in effect this was the case, as he eventually admitted.

Maj.-Gen. Rimmek has since applied for permission to retire early, which was granted immediately, and Col. Hoppe, who is not senior enough to qualify for early retirement, is said to have been transferred to another post at his own request.

Disciplinary proceedings against the two men are still in progress. Their superior officers Maj.-Gen. Vieth and Lt-Gen. Schmitz seem in contrast to have emerged from the affair unscathed.

This entire course of events cast the Bundeswehr and its commanding officers in a most unflattering light. Herr Scholz is well aware of the damage that has been done and General Jungkurth has no hesitation in owning up.

The Bundeswehr's public image, he says, has been done serious damage. There would seem to be good reason for appointing a parliamentary commission of inquiry to look into the affair. Government and Opposition are for once both disgusted.

But commissions of inquiry have been appointed on similar occasions in the past, and experience indicates that the Bundeswehr will survive the present inquiry as unscathed as it has emerged from previous inquiries.

But that will not, by any stretch of the imagination, earn it the sympathy it must enjoy if it is to succeed as an army.

It is not merely a matter of mistakes that have been made; the armed forces are no more infallible than any other institution. It is a matter of the Bundeswehr's public image, warts and all.

The latest events show yet again that the Bundeswehr is as far removed as ever from enjoying the public sympathy it needs.

They serve only to reiterate the point that claims to the effect that the Bundeswehr is fully integrated in German society are, to say the least, not entirely free of wishful thinking.

Karl Feldmeyer

(Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung für Deutschland, 15 September 1988)

Continued from page 4

cluded wage agreements covering several years and thus allowing costs to be calculated more accurately in advance.

The Bundesbank, for its part, has long maintained interest rates at a low level, while the international economic situation's contribution has been a recovery in the exchange rate of the dollar.

A further factor has been the sense of relief felt in the aftermath of the October 1987 stock market crash. Investments and purchases postponed last year are being made now.

Investments and purchases are also being brought forward now interest rates are on the increase. That alone shows that the economic climate is and continues to be unstable.

A number of research economists feel the government has already overtaxed the economy by planning to increase indirect taxation next year.

Fresh legislation tending to increase expenditure is doubtless ruled out for the time being, no matter how meaningful it might be from the viewpoint of social and family affairs policy.

Theo Mönch-Tegeder

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 9 September 1988)

■ MEETING OF WORLD BANK, IMF

Berlin gets chance to flex muscles as a financial and conference centre

The West Berlin administration has been developing the city's image as a financial centre. Earlier this year, Berlin was the host for the first international financial services conference. Several financial advisory organisations have set up headquarters there. But the blockbuster is this month: the conference of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. The influx of 10,000 delegates should give clear answers to some nagging questions such as whether conference halls are large enough and whether the city has enough hotel beds. Martina Ohm wrote this story for the Berlin daily, *Der Tagesspiegel*.

More than 10,000 delegates and journalists will descend on West Berlin for the conference of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) at the end of the month.

Besides delegates from both organisations, participants will include finance ministers, heads of central banks and senior members of the financial world plus 1,200 journalists.

There are to be 200 main meetings and conferences and 250 peripheral events over the three days.

Estimates of the value of the conference to the West Berlin economy vary from DM20m to DM50m.

The organisation will have to be honed to the finest edge, not only just because the organising committee wants it to, but because of something more important: to show that Berlin is equipped to run events on this scale.

Günter Rexrodt is West Berlin's Senator for Financial Affairs. For years, he and his staff have been doing all they can to polish the city's image as a financial and conference centre.

The city administration has been running an advertising campaign — and with success: earlier this year, the first international financial services conference was in Berlin; and similar conferences are expected next year.

Then next year the International Financial Services Institute will be set up to act as a forum for an exchange of views between executives in banking and insurance.

At the end of last year, a venture capital organisation became another of a long list of agencies set up in Berlin. The latest was at the end of last month, the working committee of German high-technology centres.

It is not surprising then that Berlin was selected for this massive World Bank/IMF conference on its own merits; even when it is only a matter of adequate infrastructure, that is whether the conference halls are large enough or whether sufficient hotel beds are available for participants.

Then, from the politicians point of view, the conference must be a success for next January elections take place in West Berlin.

The agenda for this year's conference has not yet been settled, but apart from international economic developments and the situation on foreign currency markets, the international debt crisis will be at the focal point of discussions.

But it is not expected that pioneering decisions and spectacular innovations will come out of the conference.

Bishop Kruse, council chairman of the Protestant Church in Germany, put it succinctly a few weeks ago, warning about unrealistic expectations and hopes.

In his view the annual conference is basically nothing more than "a supervisory board meeting" of the world of finance, and the accompanying conferences are a kind of international "financial fair."

He put his finger on the nub of the conference when he said that there was an ethical duty, apart from reasons of economic and international good sense, to bring an end, quickly and permanently, to the financial blood-letting in developing countries, the disintegration of government, the loss of creative powers and the erosion of survival opportunities among the poorest.

The Bishop urged that these perspectives must not be lost in the jungle of financial-technical details.

The specialised jargon which is a feature of IMF and World Bank statements and reports is incomprehensible to many people. The capacity of both organisation are probably overestimated — their own regulations mean that they are cannot be what many see them as.

They are not development-aid institutions but principally provide short-term aid during balance of payments difficulties and for long-term project and structural financing.

Their re-financing is achieved by contributions from member-countries or by borrowing on the capital market in line with current economic criteria. This has nothing to do with politics.

Many regard the classical tools for solving debt crises, that are more than 40 years old any way, are badly in need of reform. Critics concentrate on the increase in conditions imposed, particularly by the IMF.

The doors for additional credits from governments and commercial banks are opened if IMF experts just say Yes to a short-term standby credit in an emergency. The reports made by IMF experts cannot then be underrated.

Time has shown that these conditions, whose advocates are known in Washington as the "Conditionals," do not take into account adequately the social, ecological and democratic consequences.

One of the IMF's basic tasks is to increase job opportunities and real incomes in the long term among the problem countries, but for years the short-term question of balance of payments equilibrium has taken priority.

Usually demands are made to dismantle subsidies to basic foodstuffs and reduce expenditures on social services in IMF agreements made with the countries concerned in order to achieve the goal of a balance of payments equilibrium.

For years critics have demanded a reform of these conditions. They consider that their arguments have been justified by the decline, noticeable for some time, in IMF credits. This phenomenon can only be traced back in part to progress having been made in a few countries.

Moreover a new way of looking at things in developing countries is responsible for this. They cannot and will not fulfill the demands made on them.

Speculative criticism has been strengthened because IMF credit agreements are not made public. A better way to avoid false interpretation would be to me more open.

In the heavy criticism that the IMF and the World Bank have had to put up with, it is often overlooked that both of them have quite often re-considered their strategies.

Deadlines for repayments have been extended and new opportunities for credit created. Since Michel Camdessus took over as executive director last year, especially, the IMF has introduced more flexibility into its operations by the creation of new avenues for credit.

Standby credits can be guaranteed quickly and with as little red-tape as possible in future. Furthermore discussions are taking place about a permanent increase in quotas, the contributions made by members.

Finances have become an urgent matter at the World Bank over the past few months too. The chances of achieving ambitious aims have been improved by clearing the way for a capital increase of 80 per cent to $170bn.

The World Bank is of the view that its projects will make the states of Latin America credit-worthy over the next five years, ensure food supplies for Africa and wipe out poverty in Asia by the end of this century at least.

Help for the poorest of the poor is not a new thing. The International Development Association (IDA) in Washington, allied to the World Bank, has provided interest-free and long-term credits for the past 30 years to states that are badly in debt.

The diplomacy and negotiating finesse of IMF officials was responsible for avoiding a major financial crisis after Mexico announced in 1982 that it was insolvent, setting off the much talked about debt crisis.

Nevertheless since then the situation has worsened. Despite higher credits,

DER TAGESSPIEGEL

poverty in the Third World has increased. Indebtedness has almost doubled.

The total world debt is almost $1.3 trillion. That is over DM2,000bn. This can be compared with the Federal Republic budget for last year of DM270bn.

The burden of servicing repayments, that is credits and interest, has sometimes reached 50 per cent of export earnings. This does not leave any room for manoeuvre for debtor countries' own economies.

To this can be added that since 1982 the debtor countries have paid out more in interest and amortisation than they have received in credits and loans from the IMF, World Bank, governments and commercial banks.

The aim of the creditor countries must be to change this negative net transfer to a positive net transfer as soon as possible.

This cannot be achieved solely by global debt remission, which is so often demanded in public discussion as a way out of the debt crisis.

A comment by former SPD Finance Minister Hans Matthöfer is again doing

Debt relief for the poorest

Countries where Germany has written off debt

AFRICA
Burma
Mauritania
Senegal
Guinea
Sierra Leone
Ghana
Togo
Central Afr. Rep.
Sudan
Zaire
Zambia
Mozambique
Madagascar
Atlantic Ocean
Indian Ocean
1000 km

the rounds. He said: "The flight of capital, corruption and imported luxury goods for the upper classes create a Bermuda Triangle, in which greater injections of capital would just seep away without solving the problems."

Matthöfer said during his time in office that a remission of debts should not reward those who had mismanaged the economy.

"Then a large proportion of Latin America's indebtedness would be, for example, nothing more than a means of distributing the social product for the benefit of the upper classes. A remission of debt would in this case simply mean that the poor of the rich countries would be giving money to the rich of the poor countries."

Reform proposals must be wide-ranging. The high investment in armaments by developing countries, estimated to be responsible for between 20 and 40 per cent of Third World indebtedness, must be limited by revised conditions.

IMF and World Bank policies can only be altered if the member-countries want reforms and if heads of government formulate them.

If there is a lack of political will in this respect then we can wait in vain for a reformulation of the controversial conditions.

In fact the will to reform has not been clearly expressed so far by any political leader. No consideration has been given to any extent of even a general remission of debts that would have to be accompanied by the allocation of new credits. There has been a remission of debt on a case by case basis, however.

The Federal Republic has at least set a precedent by remitting the debts of 24 particularly heavily-indebted countries to the extent of DM4.2bn. According to official figures this sum, accumulated since 1978, represents a half of all remissions of this sort.

In addition Development Aid Minister Hans Klein has announced that it is intended to cancel a further DM2.3bn in debts.

These debt cancellations will be made, however, if IMF criteria are met. Only states benefit from debt cancellation of this kind which come up to IMF stipulations; that they are "particularly poor, especially burdened by debt and prepared to make economic adjustments." There is no sign that a different line will be taken.

According to Volkmar Köhler, state secretary in the Economic Cooperation Ministry, Bonn will make a decision about improving credit conditions before the Berlin conference, to give money to poor countries on easier terms.

Even at the latest church public discussion on the World Bank conference in Berlin there was talk of limiting debt

Continued on page 7

■ THE STEEL INDUSTRY

An unexpected boom, but few are under any delusion that it will last

The steel industry is going through a boomlet but the feelings of German steelmen are ambiguous.

They are delighted but they are also uneasy because they don't know why business is so good. Neither do they know when the bubble will burst.

The steel industry initially expected production this year to total between 35m and 36m tonnes. The figure now mentioned is 40m tonnes, or about 10 per cent more than last year.

Ruprecht Vondran, managing director of the Iron and Steel Industry Association: "We entirely misread the trend."

There has been a world surplus of steel since 1975. It became scarce virtually overnight even though output in the 31 leading Western steel-producing countries was 10 per cent up by the end of July.

The US steel industry has led the increase, with a 19.2-per-cent growth rate, followed by South Korea, with production 18.6 per cent up on the corresponding period last year.

In the Federal Republic of Germany steel output is 9.2 per cent up, which is a good midfield position.

Domestic demand does not account for the increase. Heinz Kriwet, board chairman of the leading German steelmaker, Thyssen Stahl, and chairman of the industry association, feels buyers are building up stocks.

Herr Vondran adds that this surmise

DIE ZEIT

cannot be statistically verified. He and Herr Kriwet now have another idea on what might account for the boom. Imports were 2.5 per cent up in the first quarter of 1988 but may even have declined.

That, they say, would hardly be surprising. In world markets steel is selling at higher prices than in the Federal Republic, as is always the case during a boom.

Orders in hand, which increased by 17.1 per cent in the first half of 1988, may be attributable to speculative buying. Steel consumers expect prices to go on increasing and are placing advance orders to make sure of the present ones.

For steelworkers it is the old, old story: from layoffs to overtime. Yet although steelmakers are working flat out, as Herr Kriwet admits, there is no question of new hirings.

The only concession managements seem prepared to make is to take on more apprentices on a permanent basis (rather than not taking them on or offering them term contracts).

There have at least been no more redundancies. Between January 1987 and April 1988 steel industry manpower was cut back by 20,000 to 180,000. Less than 180,000 men are evidently unable to produce as much steel as the market seems keen to buy, and if the boom rides out the winter (which it might well do, given orders in hand), a further manpower problem will arise.

From November German steelworkers will work a shorter, 36.5-hour week (down from 38 hours). No new hirings will then inevitably mean more overtime.

Steelworkers are not keen on the idea. Works councils are against overtime. The *IG Metall* union magazine refers to "scandalous overtime" being worked in the steel industry.

It quotes Manfred Bruckschen, works council chairman at the closure-threatened Krupp steelworks in Rheinhausen, as saying:

"What is now going on in the steel industry is sheer madness and inexplicable to all steelworkers and reasonable men."

The decision to shut down the Rheinhausen works must, he says, be reversed immediately and for good.

Krupp Stahl and Mannesmann would unquestionably be in heavy weather if they had already merged their production capacity and concentrated raw steel production at Huckingen.

They would then be in no position to derive any real benefit from the current state of the market. This year Mannesmann and Krupp will jointly produce well over six million tonnes of steel at Huckingen and Rheinhausen.

Yet Huckingen alone, even after extensions, will not be able to produce more than four million tonnes.

So it is just as well that the Krupp board met the Rheinhausen steelworkers half-way and agreed to keep at least one furnace going until the end of 1990.

This compromise, which originally looked like a mere bromide for the men, might now even come true. If sales continue at more than 120,000 tonnes a month over Huckingen's capacity, which is 340,000 tonnes, then the single furnace will continue in use at Rheinhausen.

Yet that will do no more than stem the tide of redundancies; it won't lead to new hirings worth mentioning.

The management are still planning to pare manpower to 160,000. They may reach this target by the end of next year; it may take until the end of 1990.

Bonn may even have to extend yet again the government subsidy deadline for redundancy agreements.

Technological advances are most unlikely to occur over the next two years to enable productivity to be increased sufficiently to enable output to be maintained on a much lower payroll.

Yet Herr Vondran has memories of the mid-1960s when the German steel industry produced 37 million tonnes a year with a payroll of 400,000 men.

Today, he says, the industry produces more with a payroll down by more than half. Wage bills, however, have increased from DM4bn to DM9bn a year.

If the Essen-based Rhenish-Westphalian Economic Research Institute is right in its latest forecast, there won't be any serious manpower shortage.

By next year its economists expect steel output to decline by between two and three million tonnes. So layoffs will continue, but at a slower pace.

IG Metall and the steelworkers seem to agree. They have lodged no more than verbal protests against management plans to persevere with redundancies.

What they want is to see life breathed into the so-called Frankfurt Agreement, by which steel firms agreed to create alternative jobs in steel locations.

Yet no matter how much the unions may insist, managements have not firmly committed themselves on this point. They are, nonetheless, now in a position to act on their vague undertaking

Shutdowns have been brought to a halt and, as Herr Kriwet uncompromisingly concedes: "We are all earning good money at the moment."

If the steel industry is not now in a position to create alternative employment, it will surely lay itself wide open to accusations of having signed the Frankfurt Agreement either irresponsibly or with no intention of taking it seriously.

Latest figures indicate that the steel firms have helped to ease pressure on the labour market by stemming the tide of redundancies, at least for the time being.

In North Rhine-Westphalia unemployment increased from 10.9 per cent in May to 11.1 per cent in July, but it marked time at 15.8 per cent in the Ruhr.

In Bochum, Dortmund and Duisburg, the three main steel cities, it declined on aggregate from 17.5 to 17.3 per cent.

Yet sooner or later, in the none too distant future, the boom will end, and with it the steelworkers' respite. Then they will be laid off again at a rate of 1,000 a month.

Heinz-Günter Kemmer

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 2 September 1988)

Continued from page 6

servicing. But according to an official statement from Bonn that would "not be authorised." As ever Bonn is a long way away from making concessions of this sort.

Only the SPD has expressed a clear position in the run-up to the conference, demanding that government officials should look into the budgetary possibilities for a major remission of debts.

In addition they have come out for an international conference on the debt crisis at which all participants sitting round the negotiating table should have an equal say.

The SPD has not come out for a general remission of debt and the party does not have alternative proposals either.

Some members of the Greens and the Alternative movement are the only ones in Federal Republic politics who have come out for a general remission of debts.

Who will formulate new IMF and World Bank policies if no-one has alternative proposals to offer? Preparations should be urgently undertaken to make new funds available, though international institutions, through governments, and through the commercial banks which, with their casual credit policies of the past, have undoubtedly contributed in part to the international debt crisis.

At the same time politicians in Bonn should bring the past to mind.

The London debt agreement of 1953 made possible the Federal Republic's legendary economic upswing.

Ultimately the problems must be solved by political means and not by financial-technical considerations.

The Berlin "supervisory board meeting," as Bishop Kruse described it, will not cast out the causes of the crisis, but will perhaps create a forum where discussion will be stimulated.

Martina Ohm

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 4 September 1988)

■ SHIPPING

Law to end need for flag-of-convenience option 'would cost 17,000 jobs'

DIE ZEIT

New legislation aimed at curbing the practice of out-flagging would mean that the 17,000 Germans who earn their living at sea would lose their jobs, say trade union sources.

Out-flagging is the practice where ships are swapped to a flag of convenience so they can hire cheap labour and avoid various expenses such as taxes and insurance payments. Less than half the West German merchant fleet now sails under the German flag.

Manfred Richter, FDP spokesman for shipping, says the time is overdue for the planned legislation under which a second register would be set up.

This would mean that West German vessels involved in international trade could continue to sail under the German flag but would be allowed to hire foreign crews and pay them at national rates.

Richter: "If something isn't done, this country, a major major exporting nation, will one day not have its own merchant fleet."

Shipowners have for years been calling for a second register. It is a system that has already been tried in Norway, Britain and France.

Richter: "A deckhand from the Philippines earns more on a German ship than a police chief in the Philippines."

This view and the draft legislation have caused indignation in the trade unions. The say the law would mean 17,000 seamen would lose their jobs for ever, and an important principle of labour legislation would be abandoned: equal pay for equal work.

This could have grave consequences and not only for the maritime industry.

The Bonn coalition government and the West German Shipowners' Association

> 'If something isn't done, one day, this country won't even have a merchant fleet'

load their argument with cost comparisons. Shipowners who do not out-flag are put at a financial disadvantage of DM800m annually. Of this total DM680m is accounted for by personnel costs.

A report from the Bremen-based Institute for Shipping Economics and Logistics, commissioned by the four coastal states of Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony and Schleswig-Holstein, presented similar figures.

Heinz Holdt, 50, lost his job at sea after 27 years as a cook when his ship was outflagged. He has his own view on these figures. "They are absolutely untrue," he said.

He was sitting in an office overlooking the River Weser in Bremen. Since his dismissal he has set up the "Self-help group of West German seamen." It is now a registered association with a thousand members. The office rent is paid for by donations.

Holdt, who is now the association chairman, leafed through the seamen's wage agreement. He read out: "A qualified seaman will be paid DM1,700 gross a month."

Almost any factory worker on the production line earns a lot more. Furthermore it is only seamen who have to face so much competition for their jobs on board ship.

The situation had its beginnings in the 1970s. The governments of Third World nations realised the advantages of a special service they could offer which was soon to become a secure source of income: setting up a ships' register for European and American owners.

Shipowners, who sailed under the Cypriot, Panama, Singaporean ensigns or other flags of convenience, could take on crews at their national wage rates.

Other advantages include no social insurance payments, no trade tax and West German labour legislation does not apply on board these ships.

The consequence was that West German merchant ships were out-flagged to registers all over the world. The German merchant fleet was made up of 2,690 vessels in 1970; at the beginning of this year it totalled only 662 ships.

Another consequence was that 25,000 German seamen lost their jobs. What can a ship's captain or a deckhand do on land? Holdt said: "I know captains who are glad to get work as a hall porter in a hotel."

The billions Bonn has paid out to maintain the merchant fleet at its level have so far had little effect. According to the Bonn Chancellery the government has ear-marked DM2.4bn in subsidies for shipowners for the period 1982-1990. This does not take into consideration the subsidies available to shipyards.

The *Nautila* was tied up at a pier in Bremen. It was the only ship alongside. At the stern and on the bows the word "Hamburg" could be seen, but at the masthead the Antiguan flag was flying. Holdt mockingly said: "Their merchant fleet is larger than the entire island."

He wanted to talk to the ship's crew, but that was not so easy. The crew was made up of Poles who did not even understand English.

Holdt found out that they have to pay 20 per cent of their wages in fees to the state-run agency in Poland that negotiated their employment.

Back in his office later he opened some files containing wage slips. Shipowners, who had flagged out, have made wage agreements with German seamen who, despite the out-flagging, wanted to remain on their ships.

A seaman who had been at sea a month with 18 hours overtime was paid DM705.11 nett.

A 49-year-old machine minder had agreed to a clause in a contract which said that should the Labour Court invalidate a case of instant dismissal the employer could give notice for the period stipulated by the Court, effective from the original dismissal date.

An exchange of letters between a senior engineer and a Hamburg shipowner was typical. The engineer had worked for seven months on an out-flagged vessel in the Persian Gulf. His wages did not appear and his family at home learned that the charterer had failed to pay his charter fees.

Holdt said that legal action abroad was almost pointless. Anyone who loses his shipboard job could have to face new difficulties. There are no social security benefits which means no unemployment pay.

Out-flagging creates other problems too. What happens when German safety regulations are no longer valid? And what happens if not only deckhands but also officers and captains have to give up their jobs? There is a growing tendency for this to happen.

Captain Rainer König from Bremen said: "I have seen officers sneak off from the bridge when another vessel came too close because they did not know what to do."

Officers on the bridge in out-flagged vessels have not necessarily got their master's ticket through the appropriate training.

In the Philippines a master's ticket can be acquired for $300 and bribery is very much the order of the day in arranging it.

Ralf Schneider, spokesman for the Hamburg-based West German Shipowners' Association, said: "There are certainly black sheep who take advantage of that." He added, however, that most countries did not tolerate such laxity because it harmed their reputation.

Shipping experts in the CDU and FDP consider the lack of safety measures in FoC vessels an argument in favour of their draft legislation for a second ships' register.

West German safety measures would apply to vessels listed in the second register. These measures and insurance levels would remain as they are now.

Manfred Richter explained that the only significant change with the second register was that a seaman's wages would be paid in accordance with his national wage agreement.

The Norwegian International Register, introduced almost a year ago, has been the model for Bonn's draft legislation.

More than 100 vessels have been admitted into this Register. This has meant 5,000 fewer jobs for Norwegian mariners. But the Norwegian Shipowners' Association said that out-flagging had to be stopped.

Commenting on the success of the Norwegian experience Richter said: "There has not been a noteworthy number of vessels returning to the [illegible] gian flag. It is not expected that large numbers of German vessels will return to the German flag either."

The West German Shipowners' Association is demanding that flanking measures should be introduced alongside this legislation. Ralf Schneider said: "Otherwise, despite the low wages, the cost disadvantages will remain."

Help is also proposed in this direction. The Bundesrat is due to deal with a joint application from the four coastal states. They are asking that financial aid to shipowners should be continued into the 1990s and that trade and property taxes should be halved for shipowners.

There is scarcely any resistance to these proposals from unions in the coastal states.

But there is a lot of union protest about the planned second register. Dieter Benze from the executive board of the public services union, ÖTV, said it would do away with a whole profession in this country. There would be *no* stopping shipowners signing on crewmen from Poland, China or the Philippines.

He also said that he feared for the loss of maritime know-how. The mariners' training schools in Bremerhaven and Hamburg would be abruptly emptied.

The union also says the draft legislation is contrary to Basic Law. Article 3 forbid discrimination. So the differences in pay according to nationality were breaches.

Furthermore Article 27 states: "All German vessels shall form one merchant fleet." There cannot then be two differing ships' registers.

The ÖTV also regards this draft legislation as a grave intrusion into collective bargaining rights. It says that, according to the draft legislation, foreign unions could make wage deals where Basic Law has jurisdiction.

Dieter Benze complained: "Obviously no-one is disturbed that trade unions from countries under dictatorships would become negotiating partners."

He said that the application of Turkish

> 'I have seen officers sneak off the bridge ... because they didn't know what to do'

wage agreements for Turks in the West German car industry would not be far off.

These views have caused anger in Bonn. The change in collective bargaining legislation is being targeted on just this one case. It is pointed out that the employees, the seamen, have no residential status in the Federal Republic and they are working in jobs in international waters.

Richter said: "That is not discrimination but a distinction according to residence."

Could the merchant fleet continue without a second register? The SPD intends to propose discussing the renewal of a joint European Community register.

But Carl Even, the SPD shipping expert, gave a warning. He said that by the time it could be introduced it would be too late.

There is no argument among SPD members about an alternative, proposed by Konrad Kunik, the SPD senator responsible for employment in Bremen.

He suggests that seamen should be exempt from income tax and that national [illegible] agreements could be applied to only a third of a ship's crew at the most.

Holdt said there would be a tough fight for the jobs going: "The time for talking is past. The steelworkers have given seamen encouragement".

Seamen have already protested in Hamburg, carrying a Federal Republic flag with a banana pasted over it and the words: "We don't want any banana republics."

But trade unionists and workers council members do not look to the future very optimistically in this matter. Helmut Pommerenck of the seamen's workers council in shipping company Hapag-Lloyd said: "There is no will to fight." And those who are still working on ships can hardly come to a demonstration ashore.

Hinrich Lührssen

(Die Zeit, Hamburg, 2 September 1988)



■ MOTORING

Car computer will make life easier for the abused map reader

Electronics and remote control may one day mean that women will no longer have to put up with being accused by the man at the wheel of being hopeless map-readers.

The time is near when drivers will learn from dashboard computers how to reach destinations without being held up by tailbacks, roadworks, fog and other traffic hazards.

Radio information will only be relayed to drivers when they must be told immediately. Early warning of potential dangers will be given beforehand. Computers will even point the way through one-way streets to the hotel.

Automotive engineering and electronics, the "key technologies of the advanced industrialised countries," will join forces by the mid-1990s, says Daimler-Benz research engineer Ferdinand Panik.

The combination will improve road safety and motoring's environmental track record — if Prometheus, a research project that has been run jointly since 1986 by European carmakers and university departments, is put into practice.

It is scheduled to run until 1994, but an interim report was given to a road transport congress held at the International Congress Centre in West Berlin.

Fourteen European motor manufacturers are coordinating and pooling resources to bring about a thorough improvement in road transport

Traffic planners associated with the project are working on the assumption that shortcomings of the road transport system such as traffic jams and accidents are mainly due to inadequate communication among road-users and to unsatisfactory access to latest, detailed and credible information about traffic conditions en route.

To remedy this project planners aim to make sure that the car of the future uses the best technology without distracting the driver's attention.

Engineers are convinced that modern automotive engineering ought to rule out pile-ups of 100 or more vehicles after an initial car crash in fog.

What is more, multi-purpose traffic management systems such as are currently undergoing trials in Berlin should be able to brief the motorist whenever he wants on where he is and how to get to his destination or to find the nearest parking lot, filling station or hotel. Computer experts are working on the microelectronics to ensure that dashboard computers provide reliable and trouble-free microminiaturised data processing capacity.

Prometheus planners are basing their approach on an advanced Japanese design presented to the Berlin congress by Masami Tsuzawa and Hiroyuki Okamoto of the Japan Traffic Management Technology Association.

Private traffic, they told the congress, has assumed such proportions that its advantages no longer really apply.

The car as a personal door-to-day transport system has virtually ceased to work in the Japanese capital, with far too many motorists blocking busy streets waiting for somewhere to park.

Anyone who wants to get anywhere fast in Tokyo today uses public transport, they said. Yet scarce road space was not to blame for this state of affairs.

Traffic needed to be better organised and individual road-users needed to be given more opportunities of travelling in a manner appropriate to the conditions. Japanese traffic planners have accordingly devised a dashboard computer that works as both a navigational aid and a traffic data relay system. The navigational system works out routes and indications directions to schools, hospitals, parking lots, garages and tourist destinations. This information does not need to be retrieved from an external source.

It can be stored on a compact disc with a capacity far larger than that of a standard personal computer — via a car radio with a compact disc player attached.

Japanese experts are working on the assumption that this system will ensure they maintain their lead and the Japanese motor industry survives nationally and internationally.

Without some such facility capable of keeping tabs on other road-users motorists in Tokyo for one would soon have to abandon cars that no longer got them anywhere.

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 9 September 1988)

Eliminating the human factor. Car electronics are on the way. (Photo: LISB)

With father behind the wheel, it's better to walk, say children

Motorists don't often think about what children think about their driving. A survey by *Eltern* magazine indicates that children are often apprehensive.

One 12-year-old schoolboy said: "Drive in a car with *my* dad at the wheel and you don't need a chamber of horrors."

A nine-year-old made his point in even more alarming, but not generally valid, detail. "In our family," he said, "driving is a risk to life and limb. Dad is shortsighted and mum is colour-blind, so grandpa usually does the driving."

Many children are simply afraid. Fear is much less acute when mothers drive. A 13-year-old girl: "I feel safest when mum is driving. At least she stops when the light is red and waits for the green."

Fathers who like driving fast are unpopular. "My dad drives better than mum, but much faster. He once had an accident. I don't feel worried when mum is driving", said an 11-year-old girl. High speeds scare many children. "When dad corners at 100mph I feel as sick as a parrot," says a seven-year-old.

Another, 13-year-old enjoys high speeds: "My dad drives like a Formula I racing driver. Not as safe, but as fast!"

Just like grown-ups, children have their good luck charms.

"Nothing can happen to us," says a nine-year-old boy. "We have a St Christopher next to the speedo."

A 10-year-old proudly says: "We have a Volvo, the safest car there is. Even in a head-on crash it will always come out best. So I needn't worry."

One 12-year-old boy's father may even have the best ploy: "My dad always drives as though everyone else on the road is an idiot. That way we never have an accident."

AP

(Der Tagesspiegel, Berlin, 26 August 1988)

The dashboard navigator

A multi-purpose traffic management system has been launched in West Berlin after a four-year preparatory phase.

The experimental electronic system has been developed by Bosch, Siemens, the Federal Research and Technology Ministry and the Berlin Senate.

Seven hundred cars of different makes have been fitted out with a new dashboard computer that works out the ideal point-to-point city route from information received from 240 roadside monitoring stations in West Berlin and relayed by a central traffic computer.

The motorist is then notified of hazards acoustically and by simple optical signals on a dashboard monitor screen.

He may be warned to slow down or be rerouted to detour tailbacks, accidents or roadworks.

There are 750,000 cars on the divided city's roads; by the end of the century there are expected to be over one million.

West Berlin was selected for the experiment in 1984 because of its compact geographical location, its strictly limited number of commuters and its fairly constant traffic patterns.

Infra-red monitors are located to cover all West Berlin. The system is later to be extended to include public transport, taxis, police and ambulances.

Britain is already associated with the Berlin experiment, which is aimed at boosting the capacity of road networks, while France, Spain and Italy have also expressed interest in electronic traffic management systems cooperation.

Otto-Jörg Weis

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 6 September 1988)

■ FILMS

Pow! Panel shoots back in rivetting Rambo rating row

The Film Ratings Agency (Filmbewertungsstelle) awards merit ratings to films that are sent to it. It is not a censoring body. Film-makers or distributors can submit their films (most do) together with 3,000 marks. The film might get no rating. But it might also be rated "wertvoll" (valuable) or "besonders wertvoll" (especially valuable). Films that are awarded ratings are exempted from amusement tax. The agency has run into some controversy over a rating of "valuable" given to *Rambo III*. In this story about the agency, written by Arno Makowsky for the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, a judging panel member explains that the *Rambo* award can be justified in the way "merit" is defined.

The five members of the rating committee of the Filmbewertungsstelle Wiesbaden (FBW) met in a wing of Biebrich Castle.

The committee of five, drawn from a commission of 45, was meeting for the 851st time.

Outside it was a lovely summer's day. But in a darkened room in a wing of the castle, the five were already viewing the fifth film of the day, the Norwegian production *Pathfinder*.

The story is based on a 1,000-year-old saga and deals with the struggle for survival of a peace-loving people in the land of perpetual ice.

Details of the film were noted: the name of the make-up artist: the fourth lighting assistant. When the lights went on again, it was obvious there was general agreement about it.

Rosemarie Schatter, who has often organised women's film festivals in Cologne, described it as "great." Bremen communications expert Achim Heimbrucher was more precise: "Thrilling, elegiac but also cheerful."

Gerhard Closmann, who runs an art cinema in Marburg, said that the film "left a good feeling." It had taught much about a foreign culture: for example, that the Lapps did not speak the Lappic language.

Pathfinder was given the rating "especially valuable." After the vote, there was a humourless short film to be rated. But then some humour did creep into the proceedings.

FBW administrative director Steffen Wolf said: "Today's fan mail has arrived." He waved a postcard. It read: "Enough is enough. Are your officials out of their minds, giving a rating to such rubbish as *Rambo*. Resign."

Wolf has received so much similar mail over the past few weeks that they no longer annoy him.

The five committee members merely laughed. Their colleagues in a previous sitting of the committee had given the film *Rambo III* a rating of "Valuable."

The 45 commission members are drawn from various branches of science, journalism and the film industry.

They are paid DM60 marks a sitting to cover expenses. But, more relevant, they are conscious of the fact that they have been especially selected by the Minister for the Arts in their *Land*.

Their work usually goes unnoticed, so they were at first taken aback at the storm of protest over their rating of *Rambo III*.

But Wolf said: "I think it is a good thing that we are getting talked about in this way."

Wolf accepts "a slight loss of FBW authority." Possibly fewer teachers will turn to the FBW ratings when considering which films they might suggest to their younger pupils, but he believes that it is better to have a poor public image than no image at all.

Wolf said that the outcry was based on a misunderstanding. The FBW rating is not concerned with whether the film is of aesthetic value and is committed to the good, the true and the beautiful (as the high-sounding expression "valuable" suggests).

The FBW statutes say that assessment should be based on content and genre. This means that if a film is meant to be an action film without any special profound message, and if it does contain action, it has a good chance of getting a rating.

The action in *Rambo III* takes place in Afghanistan. The hero is able to free a war comrade from a sadistic Soviet officer with the assistance of resistance fighters.

He razes to the ground a Soviet base. The mass-circulation daily *Bild Zeitung* headlined its enthusiastic review: "Rambo clears the Russians out."

For the FBW jurors the film was "an adventure film with fantastic characteristics." The film certificate points out that "the scenes of violence are staged in a restrained manner."

It is not clear whether this refers to the scene in which Rambo shoots a Russian guard in the head with such perfect aim that the blood spurts on the window pane of the watch tower; or to another where Rambo helps his friend out of a tight spot with the words, "What are friends for?", and then riddles five Russian soldiers with his automatic.

Klaus Staeck, a political graphic artist, is not alone in the view that *Rambo III* is an anti-Russian film of violence. Sophisticated film-makers also hold this view and they have replied by giving it their own rating.

Over lunch the FBW jurors themselves described their colleagues' decision on the film as wrong. To be able to talk about it, after a wearing day of viewing six films, they slipped out and went to the cinema to see *Rambo III*.

Margarete von Schwarzkopf, film editor at a radio and television company, NDR, said that the rating "was completely wrong for such a brainless pseudo-heroic myth."

Schatter could see glorification of violence in every scene and "the dialogue was reduced to grunts and sounds of strangulation."

Achim Heimbucher, who has been an FBW juror for many years, said: "This decision was a grave mistake. There is nothing to justify it and it harms the FBW image."

A mistake? In FBW information material it is stated that "arbitrariness, chance, personal bias and prejudice as well as a person's mood play no part" in FBW ratings.

Does this mean that the same criteria are applied all the time? Paragraph 6 of the FBW statutes says, for instance, that films should be assessed on content, on script, on direction, on casting and on the relationship between the plot and the form of the film; and in line with contemporary critical yardsticks.

In practice, things are different. Frau von Schwarzkopf would like to assess a



It depends what you mean by merit . . . Rambo. (Photo: dpa)

film at a moral level too. Closmann is interested in the message.

Dagmar Albrecht, who previously wrote scripts for the *Sesame Street* series, has fundamentally based her assessments on "whether it is worth sitting through a film or whether it would not be better to read a good book."

The American fairy-tale film, *The Prince's Bride* was given an "especially valuable" rating in consideration, among other things, that it dealt with the "battle between imagination and television and stupefaction," as expressed by Albrecht, and for the qualities the film had "of strengthening the ego," according to Frau Schatter.

A good book is preferred, on the other hand, to the German short-film *Leider Leiter*, since this film, according to Heimbucher, "in no way comes up to the claims of being a short tale with its

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Goldfinger dies: actor Gert Fröbe was 75

Actor Gert Fröbe, who this month died of a heart attack in Munich at the age of 75, was best known for his roles as Goldfinger in the James Bond film of the same name and as a pompous general in *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines*.

Although he was particularly good in wicked roles such as Goldfinger; as the child murderer in the film *Es geschah am hellichten Tag*, and the wrathful patriarch Björndal in *Und ewig singen die Wälder*; he showed he did have a comic streak.

Fröbe the man was sociable and good-natured, but as an actor, he knew how to transform himself.

He said: "A talented actor should always be able to get totally inside his role. I can become a child murderer, although of course I'm not one, as well as a scoundrel like Goldfinger."

Possibly the secret of his popularity was that when he took on a role, he unconditionally identified himself with it with all his might.

Fröbe's villains did not stimulate the audience to ponder on evil. They had something of the phenomenon of nature about them that could be sensed and radiated from his face.

He was not fixated on nastiness. His portrayal of the TV fairy-tale robber Hotzenplotz was not done without a touch of humour. One of Fröbe's favourite parts, the provincial director Striese in *Raub der Sabinnerinnen*, was an especial jewel of dramatic performance, even if some of it was clumsy.

He displayed with great sensitivity an old man's coyness in the exquisite duo he created with Elisabeth Bergner in the TV film *Der Garten*. At 70 he showed in



Humour with the nastiness . . . Gert Fröbe. (Photo: dpa)

his performance new facets of his talent. Fröbe was born in Zwickau, in Saxony, on 25 February 1913 and grew up in nearby Planitz. His father was a leather and rope dealer.

Fröbe had to fight hard to make a career on the stage.

He performed in amateur productions, worked as a café violinist and eventually went to Dresden to be trained as a scene painter. Actor Erich Ponto discovered Fröbe the actor and gave him his first training.

Up to the war Fröbe was given engagements in Wuppertal, Frankfurt am Main and the Volkstheater in Vienna. During the war he served as a medical orderly.

His most important film perhaps made him well-known but did not bring him great success. He played the part of the average person, a kind of John Doe, who after the war had to win through and survive, in R.A. Stemmle's *Berliner Ballade*, made in 1948.

Fröbe was small and slim then. It was some years and a few extra pounds in weight before Fröbe became internationally famous as a powerful guy, blinking, laughing but with an evil ulterior motive.

Fröbe made more than 100 films. Television extended his fame. How often has just one of his films, *Those Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*, been shown on television?

Fröbe was a guarantee of vigorous, often well-made entertainment.

He was ill for long periods in the 1980s — he had lung cancer. He retired to write his memoirs.

Recently, much thinner, he revived his interest in cabaret and recitation.

A week ago he appeared in a sanatorium on the Starnberger See. He planned to go on tour with a show, reciting and telling tales.

But after his appearance at the Starnberger See sanatorium he had to be taken to the Munich University Hospital, where he died.

Rainer Hartmann

(Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, Cologne, 6 September 1988)

■ THE ARTS

Exhibitions show the many sides to the talents of Oskar Schlemmer

Oskar Schlemmer was born 100 years ago — on 4 September 1888. Few artists have been as versatile: he was a painter and sculptor, stage designer and teacher. He was a phenomenon who managed to avoid being labelled. To mark the anniversary, exhibitions have been organised in Stuttgart and Basle.

Oskar Schlemmer was a painter, set designer, choreographer, dancer and art theorist. He was one of the creators of the character and form of modern art.

His creations were not aimed against man, an accusation that was levelled against him, but were the results of experimenting in many European art studios during the First World War.

Schlemmer was born on 4 September 1888 in Stuttgart. He became a pupil of the colour theoretician, Adolf Hölzel.

In 1915, he was advised and supported by the Stuttgart dance duo Albert



Bauhaustreppe, oils on canvas 1932, Oskar Schlemmer.

Burger and Elsa Hötzel to create a new ballet concept.

They wanted to get away from the stereotyped form of classical dance. The Triad Ballet originated in the search for an up-to-date form of expression.

The Triad Ballet involved a trinity. The number three was a magical number for Schlemmer. He did not want to have more than three dancers on stage at any one time.

Schlemmer, a gifted dancer, joined the dance duo Burger and Hötzel as the third in the group.

The Triad Ballet had not reached its full maturity when Walter Gropius, head of the Bauhaus invited him to be "the creator of murals" in Weimar, leaving him free, however, to continue with his Stuttgart plans.

The première of the Triad Ballet, on 30 September 1922 in the Württembergisches Landestheater, with Schlemmer as Diver, the Sphere Costume, the Disk Dancer, the Gold Sphere and the Abstraction, was a great success.

The Stuttgart newspaper *Neue Tagblatt* described the ballet as "surprisingly new, original and powerful."

Schlemmer's figures were no longer individuals. He shared George Grosz's view that individuality should be bypassed and must be discarded. This was the response to the vague, the sentimental, the non-committed.

Schlemmer's costumes were not made of material whose movements could not be controlled but out of firm, and sometimes heavy materials such as papier-mâché, wood, metal, celluloid, leather and lacquer. Even the human features were stylised.

The dance movements were influenced by space and its stereometric laws. Schlemmer wrote: "The law of organic man is hidden in the invisible functions of his innermost being. The human being as dancer is interwoven in all these laws. He is just as subject to the laws of the body as the laws of space."

He dressed the dancers, who should make visible the space in which they moved, in costumes which did not portray them psychologically or in any other way.

Basic geometric forms were dominant, the circle, the straight line, the diagonal, the elipse and spiral.

The movements were calculated very carefully with a strong rhythmic element, solemn and eloquent.

His scenes were just as consistently created, geometric to the point of abstraction.

This stylisation came in for much criticism. It was dismissed as formalistic fooling about. But behind it there was a very definite outlook on the world.

In 1926 Schlemmer said: "If artists today prefer machines, technology and organisation, if they want the precise rather than the vague and fuzzy, that is instinctive salvation from chaos and a longing to shape our era," the modern machine age.

He resisted the zealotry for things oriental, an inclination to the mystical and sectarianism, rife in the Bauhaus.

He spread the idea of "the unity of art and technology." Even the Dada Movement stood in the way of the search for the conformity with natural law.

The Dadaists were pushed aside as court jesters of the middle classes. Oskar Schlemmer demanded a return from farce and utopian dreams.

The solution went along the lines: "Instead of cathedrals living machines." Tirelessly the view was expressed that "Our communal conscience will not tolerate individualistic excesses."

Production was the job in hand, not personal development, not the so-called "interior freedom and self-discovery."

In 1925, together with Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, he brought out *Die Bühne im Bauhaus*, the fourth of the Bauhaus serious publications. This book focused on the Triad Ballet but it created a stir with its stage-set designs for works that had not yet been written.

It emphasised that Schlemmer, the constructivist and solemn man, was gifted with a subliminal humour. Humour was part of his artistic viewpoint, it was an indispensible component of his work.

There was no end to his work on the Triad Ballet. It was never completed. Attempts to build on the success in Stuttgart foundered. Costs were high, receipts few or non-existent.

Schlemmer was not embarrased at making concessions — in a Berlin revue theatre there were twelve dancers on stage at the same time. He was not coy at making public appearances — in Dresden at the annual exhibition of German labour and in Frankfurt at the opening of a bridge.

In 1932 he put all his hopes on a competition in Paris. Fernand Léger and René Clair were members of the jury. He hoped that by taking part he would gain international recognition and even offers of film contracts.

But here as well disaster struck. The music was held up at customs. The stage-manager had to improvise the musical accompaniment on the piano.

The light changes were not done properly and for a time the lighting failed completely. The floor covering at the Théâtre des Champs Elysees was so smooth the dancers slipped.

But despite all, Schlemmer's costumes made a powerful impression, particularly on Léger. The Triad Ballet was awarded third prize.

Then there was a quarrel — with dancers Elsa Hötzel and Albert Burger, who had supported the Ballet financially and who now claimed they had performing rights in it.

There was no-one who could mediate between the three. A low suit was the result. Schlemmer had to bear all the costs and lost some of his costume designs. His debts mounted.

He was no longer working at the Bauhaus. When the Bauhaus moved to Dessau in 1929 and the new director pursued an extreme left-wing course politically, Schlemmer took up a professorship in Breslau.

A conservative school of architecture was set up in the old Bauhaus building in Weimar. The rector was a Nazi. One of his first official acts was to have Schlemmer's murals painted over in white. Anti-Nazi

Schlemmer as he saw himself, 1931/32. (Photos: Catalogue)

Schlemmer remained true to his theories. He said: "We require number, measurement and law to be forearmed and as the mental equipment for not being devoured by chaos."

Schlemmer's artistic viewpoint gained political relevance. Comments of this sort were against the fascists.

In a letter to Propaganda Minister Goebbels, he protested against the establishment of the so-called "chamber of horrors of art."

He lost his professorship and from 1935 he was forbidden to paint. His pictures were declared "degenerate" and removed from museums.

In 1938 the brilliant Oskar Schlemmer was earning a living in a Stuttgart paint shop. In 1940 he was working in a Wuppertal lacquer factory.

But a painter must paint, otherwise he perishes. Schlemmer created a series of stained glass windows in the small format of 13 x 24 cms. They are at present in the Basle Kunstmuseum.

Exhausted by depression, he died in Baden-Baden in 1943.

Next to his painting *Bauhaustreppe*, in the Museum of Modern Art in New York, his most significant work was the Triad Ballet. A few years ago attempts were made to reconstruct it, but the attempt came to grief.

The spirit of the times had changed. The original costume designs, those that have survived, are on display in the Württembergische Staatsgalerie.

● Two exhibitions have been organised to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Schlemmer's birth.

The Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart is displaying 80 of Schlemmer's watercolours painted between 1913 and 1943; and the Öffentliche Kunstsammlung in Basle has mounted an exhibition called *Oskar Schlemmer. Stained Glass Windows and Landscapes 1931-1942*.

Heinrich Goertz

(Hannoversche Allgemeine, 2 September 1988)

Continued from page 10

trivial, stupid, puzzling style." Wolf would not allow the use of the word "stupid" in the film's certificate. He said that would be an insult.

Another consideration was that the film's producers had paid DM3,000 to put their film up for judgment. Was it worth their while?

Helmut Eichhorn from the Film Distributors Association in Munich said that the FBW rating was "of an inestimable prestige value."

Last year, the committee looked at 157 films for rating — most of the films released in Germany. Two-thirds were given a rating.

But what is more important for distributors and cinema owners than the glory, honour and advertising value of a rating is that it exempts a film from amusement tax.

In the Saar, North-Rhine Westphalia and Bremen distributors and cinema owners save between 10 and 20 per cent of box office revenue in this way. In the other *Länder*, amusement tax has been abolished.

For the committee in Wiesbaden the exemption from taxes through a rating has an indirect influence on film policy.

"We stimulate production companies to produce quality films and cinemas to screen them," said Wolf wistfully.

In practice this does not happen to any great extent. For years horror and pornographic films have been exempt from tax if a short film with a rating is shown before the main programme. This means for fans of Beate Uhse films (the long-standing queen of Germany's pornographic business) and horror film fans that they have to sit through a short film on the breeding habits of budgerigars, for instance.

It is convenient if the main film has a rating itself. Instead of treating audiences to an instructive short film then, they have to put up with advertising.

There is another provision which adds an odd note: feature-length films more than 1,600 metres long gain a rating for ever. Shorter films lose theirs after five years. So, in this sense, *Rambo III* will have immortal fame. It is 2,770 metres long.

Arno Makowsky

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 24 August 1988)

■ THE ENVIRONMENT

Modern man not the first of his species to engineer ecological disasters

Roman colonisation of North Africa began promisingly with the steady southward extension of crop-growing.

Grain was sown and olive trees were planted as far south as the dry steppes of Tunisia, and North Africa became a granary of the Roman empire.

But the Romans had made a serious ecological mistake. Agricultural expansion removed the natural grass cover that protected the soil, leading to erosion.

The loose topsoil was steadily lost, leaving behind a hard and hostile calcareous crust.

Acreage had to be abandoned in the wake of this ecological disaster, creating serious supply difficulties in Ancient Rome.

So the relationship between man and the environment has been fraught with difficulties for far longer than our own day and age.

Yet the contemporary environmental crisis has prompted scientists to take a closer look at the historical dimension of the complex interplay between development and ecology.

In recent years environmental history has emerged as an academic discipline in the Federal Republic of Germany.

It differs distinctly in aims and methods from the classical academic study of history, being based mainly on biology and ecology.

Its research findings have ended

RHEINISCHER MERKUR

many a cliché. Alleged Stone Age savages were, for instance, settled farmers with well-considered methods of production and land use.

Angela Kreuz, a biologist employed at one of the five German archaeo-botanical laboratories, makes this point in the 1-2/1988 issue of the Frankfurt research journal *Forschung Frankfurt*.

She does so in connection with the 5700-5300 BC prehistoric settlement in Friedberg-Bruchenbrücken, Hesse.

In 1984/85 the site was excavated to the latest archaeological standards. It was also investigated by soil research scientists, zoologists and botanists.

It was a settlement of the earliest European farming civilisation, known by its distinctive kind of pottery.

We now know that our farming forebears were most deliberate and economic in their use of the deciduous forest that was their most important source of raw materials ranging from wood for fuel and tools to the wild plums, elderberries and hawthorn they gathered.

Pollen analysis has shown there to have been few large-scale clearances, and when a clearing was felled shrubs were planted at the edge of the forest as the basis of hedges. This civilisation also introduced new varieties of plants and domestic animals. The soil quality of their fields was good and fertilisation was unnecessary.

"Human existence," says Göttingen anthropologist Bernd Herrmann, "its foundations and peripheral conditions cannot be illuminated without a profound scientific background and biological theory."

As one of the Federal Republic's leading environmental historians he is most insistent that it is not a question of superseding the past study of history but of expanding knowledge by means of an interdisciplinary approach.

This approach makes it possible to come by knowledge about the past that has eluded classical historians.

Bone analysis of mediaeval skeletons has, for instance, shown them to have been subjected to a surprisingly high degree of lead pollution.

People in the Middle Ages were exposed to, or consumed, far larger quantities of lead than their Stone Age forebears; exposure levels were even higher than they are today.

The solution to this puzzling laboratory finding was that lead additives were long used as foodstuff sweeteners. Lead pollution did not decline until other sweeteners were more widely used.

Ecological historians deliberately take a wider view of the concept of the environment. They deal not only with man's natural surroundings but also with living conditions, hygiene problems and eating habits.

Food can yield particularly revealing results when science and the arts join forces. Mediaeval cookery books and stocklists are a valuable pointer to the use of food and the methods of cultivation, not to mention the variety of fruit and vegetables, meat and fish mediaeval man ate.

Yet these sources alone are seldom enough to arrive at quantitative or regional conclusions. Mediaeval cesspits have, in contrast, emerged as an important source of information.

Parasites

As they were often left unemptied for long periods and the damp, low-oxygen atmosphere was ideally suited to conserving the contents, animal and vegetable remains of meals can still be identified by biologists.

So can parasites such as tapeworms that must often have given their hosts serious trouble.

Research into environmental history also shows how heavily dependent pre-industrial man was on his surroundings for what he ate.

Research into the contents of a hillock in the marshlands of Schleswig-Holstein, the remainder of centuries of early mediaeval settlement, shows mediaeval man to have lived on a diet of four crop plants for over 300 years.

They were linseed, from which oil was refined, a little oats and barley, and broad beans, which are now used almost exclusively as fodder.

There was no woodland in the marshes, so they couldn't gather berries or wild fruit. They bred cattle on a modest scale, and that was that. There were no imports; they were a self-contained and self-sufficient community.

What a far cry from the early mediaeval trading post of Haithabu, only a few dozen miles away on the outskirts of modern Schleswig!

Barley, oats, rye, millet and broad beans were grown. Fruit and berries were gathered. Hops were grown. There was hunting in the woods and fishing in the Schlei.

Pigs, poultry and cattle were kept. As a busy trading settlement Haithabu imported wine, almonds and other luxury goods.

The beginnings of an environmental approach to the study of history date back to the mid-19th century, when Stone Age lake-dwellings in Central Switzerland were investigated.

Large quantities of animal bones and vegetable remainders were found. Lists of species identified were compiled. Archaeologists gained their first clear idea about what Stone Age man ate.

Environmental archaeology has long been an established discipline in, say, Britain and the Netherlands, where it is taught at several universities. No such facility is available in Germany, although specialist literature has lately increased in quantity.

Yet the questions raised by environmental history must surely be of contemporary interest. Environmental problems in the narrower sense of the term date back to the Middle Ages, water constantly having given densely-populated cities trouble.

Regular sewage disposal did not gain currency until the late Middle Ages, it previously having been the concern of the individual, with the result that excrement was dumped anywhere people saw fit, creating hygiene problems.

Tanners must have been a real nuisance: they were certainly the subject of constant complaints. They used urine as a depilatory and fish oil to grease their hides.

The smell was not the only problem. Epidemics were frequently triggered by tanners' waste dumped by the roadside or poured into the river. That was why they were frequently banned to the city limits.

Legislative attempts to deal with environmental problems also date back to the Middle Ages. Strict regulations were proclaimed by Holy Roman Emperor Frederick II for the kingdom of Sicily in the 13th century.

Hemp and flax were only to be watered outside settlements as otherwise the air would be polluted. Animal carcasses and waste were not to be dumped inside city limits either.

There was a specific ban on dumping herbs into the water that were felt to poison the drinking-water and the fish. Offenders were to be sentenced to a year's forced labour in chains.

Whether environmental history has a part to play in solving modern problems is another matter. Problems differ too widely and drawing ill-considered parallels does neither the present nor the specific historical conditions of past eras justice.

Our own era is by no means the first to have tended to arrive at the wrong decisions or to reach the right ones too late or to do nothing at all.

Environmental problems are nothing new, but human activity (or inactivity) can either solve them or allow them to assume catastrophic proportions.

Historical knowledge makes it much easier to arrive at an understanding of ecological relationships.

Bernd Kleinhans

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 2 September 1988)

■ AIDS

A victim's two worlds: the one that knows and the one that doesn't



Shall I just let go? Aids victim.

(Photo: Kumpfmüller)

"I live in two different worlds," says 24-year-old Sabine, a former clerk. One of those worlds knows; the other doesn't. She has Aids.

One world is hospital and the Aids support group. Her parents also know.

But her brother, let alone the rest of the family, her former workmates and friends and acquaintances don't.

As we met at the Aids support centre it was clear that she was worried the outside world might learn about the other — and discover her secret.

She has brought along a female friend who is keen to know more about the Aids support group's work.

The friend doesn't know Sabine is an Aids victim. "I told her I work here as a volunteer," Sabine explains. As we chat in the office her friend is briefed by a member of staff outside.

Yet even though discretion is a matter of course, Sabine is still worried someone might inadvertently let the cat out of the bag. For the family's sake, not her own. "They would really be hard hit if people knew I had Aids."

She says she was an ordinary young woman until two-and-a-half years ago. She had heard about Aids but felt sure it couldn't happen to her; she didn't take drugs and had a steady boyfriend.

She didn't imagine the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) might be to blame for the enlarged spleen she was found to have while in hospital for a hernia operation. She wasn't told.

She gave several blood samples, but didn't find out until she went for a gynaecological examination.

"You mean to say you haven't been told?" the doctor asked, without looking up. "You are HIV-positive and have about six years left to live. Now go back to your room, please."

There must have been some mistake. Even though doctors and nurses were much more reserved in their behaviour toward her and she was released much earlier than planned, she simply didn't believe it.

She had another test. The finding was the same: HIV-positive. The doctor wanted to talk to her but she rushed out in blind panic.

The next year was sheer hell. She withdrew from society for fear, talked to no-one about her complaint. Sex was out of the question in any case.

But she did ring her former boyfriends. Two took Aids tests and were found to be negative; the third refused, saying: "If I have it, it's from you."

She now feels sure it was he who infected her. "We had a weekend relationship, he travelled a lot, abroad too. And I know he was promiscuous."

Yet she isn't embittered. "I wanted to have the affair. I enjoyed it. Why should I condemn it now I have the virus? I don't know whether he knew he had it."

She carried on working as though nothing had happened. "I even laughed when workmates told jokes about Aids," she recalls.

She couldn't tell her parents. Cautiously asked what they felt about Aids, they had said: "They all ought to be sent to the gas chamber." In the end she felt for weeks that it could only be a bad dream.

Then she began to show signs of typical symptoms. She had a skin rash. "You look as though you have Aids," her workmates joked.

She consulted her family doctor again for the first time since learning the bad news. "He was utterly shocked. I was his first Aids patient."

She was sent to hospital, where she promptly encountered prejudice. "They simply wouldn't believe me. Time and again they said I must have been either a drug addict or a prostitute."

No-one imagined she wasn't a member of what are primly called risk groups. It took many examinations for the doctors to believe her.

In hospital she met her first other HIV-positive patients, mainly homosexual men and drug addicts. But she would have nothing to do with them. "I didn't want to be seen as one of them. I saw myself as normal."

As a result of this second spell in hospital, her parents found out. Her mother was understanding, feeling instinctively that she must protect her daughter. Her father was shocked; his instinctive reaction was: "No-one must ever find out."

Sabine gave up. She no longer wanted to live. "I decided not to commit suicide but to let the virus get on with the job."

She developed the fully-fledged symptoms of Aids within months, possibly because she had given up. She had to go back into hospital.

This time she was offered psychotherapy and came to trust a young chaplain with whom she talked at length and regained the courage she needed to face life.

She also overcame her fear that the Aids support group would consist solely of "queers and other social outsiders." To her surprise she found that many of its clients were women in a much more advanced state than she was.

Some of them were "ordinary women" with children who had been infected via blood transfusions. Some were former drug addicts.

"They rebuilt my self-confidence and showed me I must do something for myself."

She came to set aside her prejudice against homosexual men too, saying:



"They're just as normal as I am." She decided to work as a volunteer member of the support group, mainly for women ("It's worst for them").

Dr Hans Jäger, head of the immunodeficiency diseases ward at Schwabing Municipal Hospital, Munich, agrees.

Since 1984 he and his colleagues have asked all patients, including 58 women, to complete a questionnaire on the mental burden of having learnt they were HIV-positive.

Evaluation of the answers this summer revealed that "all patients are very heavily burdened, but women even more heavily."

The emotional and mental burden from which women suffer is not just heavier; it is also specific. Women have far less effective social support systems on which to rely.

By definition a woman's role is that of the nurse, Dr Jäger says, whereas she can rely on little or no support from the family, if any, when she herself is chronically ill. Women, like homosexual men, feel much harder hit by declining appearance than heterosexual men. Women are usually much worse off financially, especially if they have a drug history, than homosexual men. Women have to come to terms with the idea of possibly having an HIV-positive baby or of forgoing motherhood. Women who already have children must come to terms with the idea that sooner or later they may have to find foster-parents for them. Single women seldom find a new boyfriend. Dr Jäger has identified substantial distinctions in the burden felt within a category. "The idea will have at some stage have occurred to most female drug addicts that they might be infected. For others the news comes as a total shock."

It is a shock that can last weeks — weeks in which women who frequently have children are utterly unable to discuss the diagnosis.

They face a mountain of problems, such as how to handle the fact that they are HIV-positive in the family when Aids is so stigmatised.

They become hopelessly isolated, being unable to talk it over with neighbours or relatives. You can tell someone you have chronic kidney trouble, but you can't tell anyone you have to go to hospital once a fortnight because you have Aids.

The news often comes as a shock to partners, and not just for fear of being infected themselves.

Yet experience at Schwabing Hospital has shown that although a single sexual contact may be enough, most partners aren't infected despite frequent intercourse.

"We don't know exactly how men contract HIV from women," Dr Jäger says. "They certainly seem to do so less frequently than vice-versa."

Once the initial shock has subsided most women are in a position to shape for themselves. Many feel a strong sense of social responsibility and become Aids support group workers like Sabine or take on individual commitments like looking after an infected child.

Dr Jäger feels this sense of commitment is most important. "It helps the patients themselves. It may be no substitute for therapy but it does have a therapeutic effect."

On the basis of its experience the Schwabing clinic pays special attention to the problem of HIV-positive women and has set up a comprehensive network extending from medical care and psychotherapy to social work and self-help groups.

"We have come to appreciate," Dr Jäger says, "that handling the serious and specific problems faced by homosexual men is child's play in comparison with the problems that arise when we are confronted with entire family systems."

Professor Wolfgang Schramm, head of the haemostaseology department at Munich University Hospital, has been dealing with families for years. He is a founder member of the Bavarian haemophiliac support group, the first of its kind in the country.

It looks after haemophiliac men and children HIV-infected via blood transfusions. About 1,500 cases are known to exist over the entire country.

He and his staff have found, in several years' work, that families usually respond more calmly to a HIV-positive diagnosis than others.

This is because families have grown accustomed to the idea of a haemophiliac husband or son being under sentence of death, as it were.

Their usual response, he says, is: "After all we have been through we'll see this one through too."

Marriages have, of course, been known to break up, with non-infected wives leaving their husbands for fear of infection or isolation.

Mothers of infected children are under particularly severe strain. Burdened by feelings of guilt for having transmitted hereditary haemophilia to their son, they tend to overdo the care and attention.

This may even go so far as not to tell the children what their complaint is (even though they, like children suffering from cancer, well know something is wrong).

The Bavarian haemophiliac support group tries to help these families with both medical assistance and comprehensive psychotherapeutic help.

This is particularly important in that the social situation of HIV-positive haemophiliacs is governed by fear and isolation.

Sabine has set herself the task of ending the isolation felt and experienced by women in particular. She visits them in hospital and says they are delighted to see her.

But once they are released and go back home they no longer have the courage to come in out of the dark, as it were. She tried to set up a women-only self-help group but she was usually on her own.

That is why she would like to see more publicity such as explanatory brochures for women who have no time to attend sessions at treatment centres.

Her long-term aim is to see an officer appointed to deal solely with women at the Deutsche Aids-Hilfe and to arrange a nationwide meeting of HIV-positive women and female Aids patients.

Inga-Maria Richberg

(Frankfurter Rundschau, 3 September 1988)

■ THE MEDIA

Editorship of magazine crowns a journalist's meteoric rise

RHEINISCHER MERKUR

At 37, Beate Wedekind has become editor-in-chief of a magazine after only eight years in journalism.

This month the first German-language edition of the French women's magazine, *Elle*, appears under her editorship.

When she began work on newspapers at the realitively advanced age of 29, she gave herself until she was 40 to become an editor. It was an underestimate.

Frau Wedekind has for several years been a columnist in Germany's second largest illustrated weekly, *Bunte*.

The readers will miss her. In her column, which occupied a top spot, she used a lot of flair to satisfy their curiosity with stories about things that were a far cry from their daily lives.

For 200 days a year, she jetted round the world to exchange small talk, and sometimes something deeper, with VIPs. But now she is deskbound in Munich.

She has almost made up her team (both men and women) for the first German issue of *Elle*. The Paris-based magazine already has a foot in the US, Hong Kong, Spain, Italy and Britain.

Hubert Burda, of the Offenburg-based Burda publishing group which is publishes *Bunte* as well as the new magazine, quickly realised who should be editor-in-chief.

Although he does not agree with her politics, (the weekly magazine *Der Spiegel* used to chatter about her membership of the SPD), he values her immense energy, flair and her contacts.

Frau Wedekind comes from Dortmund. This non-practising Catholic is a classical music lover.

She came late to journalism. Her career began a far cry from it — in banking. Her father had wanted that.

Then she became, as a stop gap, an air stewardess, because she regarded it as too soon, at 18, to have to make up her mind about a life-long career.

She worked as a development aid assistant in Ethiopia for three years.

She was 29 before she began newspaper training with a Berlin daily. She changed to the mass-circulation *Bild Zeitung* and from there she followed a colleague she much admired to the Burda organisation in Offenburg.

Her climb up the career ladder began. She worked first in the light entertainment section of the magazine. In 1983 she was given the "Mein Rendezvous" column. She became department head and quickly a leading member of the editorial board.

In the magazine's credits she was listed under "special responsibilities," which included the annual Bambi Prize presentations, West Germany's mini-Oscar for film and television offered by *Bunte* and *Bild und Funk*, also from the Burda stable.

She was asked why she went to Ethiopia? She said that it was less her sense of social involvement than her interest in "the problems of relationships."

She is audacious enough to say, without turning a hair, that she was one of the first to deploy her sense of social involvement for the Third World in Ethiopia in the three year's she was there. She still has contacts in Ethiopia but she has no intention of working there again.

Frau Wedekind speaks of her Berlin experiences with obvious pleasure. It was good training. She learned to research her material quickly, write every day and get to know people. She never felt that *Bild Zeitung* was menacing.

Then *Bunte* came into her life. As a new staff member she never let "an event or première go by. I was out every evening to make myself known."

She applied energy and tenacity to get to dine with the top people in the world of business, the arts, politics and show business.

Her appointments schedule became tighter and tighter and she soon reached the stage where she could discard invitations that once would have been important.

But there are some people she has never managed to interview. Hopes of getting an appointment with Greta Garbo and Fidel Castro remain unfulfilled.

Her column ranged from the amusing to the exciting. It was never hurtful.

Only once did a letter of complaint from a VIP reach her address-book-strewn desk in the smart Burda offices in Munich.

How could anyone complain? She only offered her readers a bland glimpse into society parties. On the one hand this was a way of remaining in the business, on the other it was an expression of her character.

Self-defence, she said, inhibited her from writing about drunken VIPs. She did not write in her column that Lady Di (the Princess of Wales) had chewed finger nails but that they were "surprisingly short."

Her approach was crowned with success. Her column quickly became an indispensible contribution to *Bunte*, which has a circulation of just over a million copies a week. She travelled constantly and used her "Rendezvous" interviews with prominent people in finance, sport and the aristocracy for talks of a deeper nature. In a regular column at a higher level, "Bunte-Interview," she showed that she was capable of more than just small talk. She herself became a VIP, which she regards as "simply tiresome." But she likes to be noticed and she acknowledges this. She is recognised in a plane or café not only because of her high society cocktail party pictures that have appeared on the back-page of *Bunte*.



No time to fall in love properly . . . Beate Wedekind.

(Photo: Elle)

Selecting pictures from a pile in the Burda offices she said, to quote her exactly: "I think I'm divine in photographs."

She made her debut as a TV interviewer of the famous and she is proud of the fact that she got good reviews of her first TV appearance in *Münchner Abendzeitung*, renowned for its tough criticisms, but it is not easy to transpose what has been a successful format in an illustrated magazine to the TV screen. The series was discontinued.

Frau Wedekind denies that the shadow of the unforgettable TV interviewer Margret Dünser, now dead, could have played a part in this. Comparison would be "unfair," she said. Briefly she says her name is not Dünser, that she has a different personality and that the only reason for ending her flight into TV was a difference of opinion between herself and her producer on the presentation of the programme. No more discussion.

She has to admit that she had sought a career in television. But that is a thing of the past with the setting up of the *Elle* project. Or at least it is postponed. She is not the kind of woman who does the same thing all the time.

There is only one thing she does every year; she celebrates Christmas with her mother in Dortmund.

Beyond that she does not have a private life. She takes only five days holiday a year. She said: "I like nothing better than to work."

Two years ago she had to go for a course in a spa because of exhaustion. She knows that she cannot keep up the pace for ever.

"I'm not married. I have a friend. He is a publisher and he accepts that we can only see each other once every fortnight," she said.

But despite her enthusiasm for her new job she does not lose sight of her future. She said: "One day I shall be 55 and there will perhaps then be nothing more in the future for me." For this reason she puts great store on her circle of friends.

She likes buying clothes (her favourite colours are black and red) but she said laconically: "You might laugh but I'm a saver."

Looking very stern she said: "I would hate to be old and alone. That would be terrible for me. I must fall in love properly one day." But there is no time for that now.

Her first edition of *Elle* will have a printing run of 330,000 copies. Her first editorial will be read with considerable interest by her women readers.

The new women's magazine will be "excitingly different," according to the French publishers of *Elle*.

Frau Wedekind has the experience, ambition and goodwill of Hubert Burda behind her. She will pull through.

But watch out, Cathérine Ettlinger, who headed *Elle* New York, only kept the job for nine months.

Alexander Holzbach

(Rheinischer Merkur/Christ und Welt, Bonn, 2 September 1988)

Call for law change after case of censorship by mutilation

A young woman reporter employed by the publicist magazine *Tempo* had the idea for the biggest story of her 26 years on this earth: three days in Hamburg's notorious Herbert Strasse being trained in the arts of Domina sexual practices — sado-masochist sex.

Editor Markus Peichl said the reporter had believed that the article would be her avenue to a super career (as a journalist). "I hope she makes it."

When her bizarre training course was over and the manuscript landed on Peichl's desk, his doubts were confirmed. In a somewhat unnecessary mixture of astonishment, horror and undisguised fascination, she told readers how she, as a Domina assistant, was allowed to use a whip and leather straps on the customer..

Three lawyers went over the copy and removed the bloodier excerpts and other modifications were made. Out of consideration for her father, a well-known author from Hamburg, she used a pseudonym.

After a two-week delay, the August edition of *Tempo* finally reached the newsstands. The headline on the cover was "Ich war Domina" (I was Domina).

The ambitious young reporter might well remain in public memory; perhaps she will even enter German Press history. But for that, she can thank not so much what she wrote; rather two Munich Press distributors and their lawyer, Wolfgang Auer.

He saw the story and decided that it was pure pornography, the delivery of which to the newsstands would infringe paragraph 184 of the penal code and the law against the dissemination of writings harmful to youth.

So he recommended that his clients distribute *Tempo* without its cover. Peichl says that, without his knowledge, the publishers, Jahreszeiten Verlag, reached a compromise under which the Bavarian circulation would be limited to 25,000, an appreciable cut, and the last page of the Domina report would be torn out of each copy.

This was the third case inside 10 months where large distributors decided that a magazine was carrying something pornographic and either refused

Continued on page 15

■ FRONTIERS

The fading glory of the Heroes of Mogadishu

STUTTGARTER ZEITUNG

It took just seven minutes for GSG 9 to achieve world-wide fame: that was the time it took this anti-terrorist unit, during the night of 18 October 1977, to storm a Boeing 737 aircraft on the runway at Mogadishu, in the Horn of Africa, and end a hijacking.

Eighty six hostages were freed — one of them slightly injured — and three terrorists killed. One terrorist survived but was seriously wounded. None of the anti-terror unit was hurt.

The tag of "heroes of Mogadishu" has stayed with the unit. So, the question was raised some conservative politicians during the bank robbery-kidnap in August (as reported in THE GERMAN TRIBUNE on 4 September) why GSG 9 (it stands for *Grenzschutzgruppe 9*) was not called in. Two hostages were killed and one policeman died when the car he was pursuing the robbers in crashed.

Many thought that the unit would be better suited than the police to end the affair quickly and without innocent people dying.

GSG 9 was established in September 1972 after Arab terrorists took Israeli athletes as hostages during the Olympic Games in Munich. It ended in a blood bath.

[illegible], the individual *Lander* set up their own anti-terror units, but by this time, GSG 9 had a great advantage in experience.

Now, all the *Länder* have well-trained special units whose main function is to disarm and arrest armed and dangerous criminals; and to conduct under-cover operations.

Whereas GSG 9 can be called up by individual *Länder* at any time, the *Länder's* own special units are, in practice, always on duty — that is their strength.

Specialists in this field — the exception is in Bavaria — refrain from giving opinions about colleagues in other *Länder*. But it had emerged from discussions that the units in each *Land* are rated equally highly.

One point that is challenged is that there is a difference between those units in *Länder* governed by the Social Democrats and those governed by the conservative union. This had been alleged by some politicians during the hostage drama last month (most of the action took place in [illegible] North Rhine-Westphalia and the rest in SPD-governed Bremen and in Holland).

One specialist explained it this way: once the decision to set up such a specialist unit has been taken, the project tends to develop its own dynamics in accordance with already established criteria in the field — and this happens well away from political influence.

The individual *Länder* are convinced that their own units are well-enough trained and armed to deal with the toughest cases imagineable — including hijacking aircraft.

The Bavarians clearly think this about their own unit, as was embarrassingly revealed during the drama last month when Bavarian officials openly replayed the events over as they would have handled it to prove that the criminals Rösner and Degowski would have had no chance in their *Land*.

In drawn-out cases, such as this one, it is the practice of the *Länder* to help each other out by use the special anti-terror units. A recent example was in Bruchsal, in Baden-Württemberg, when units from both Baden-Württemberg and the neighbouring *Land* of Rhineland Palatinate were used.

From this it can be seen that the decision by *Land* interior ministers each to develop individual forces has led to a reduction in the number of operations for the national unit, GSG 9. The *Länder* mostly call in GSG 9 when their own forces are at the end of their tether.

This development has been for a long time predictable: the less often GSG 9 is used, the less practical experience it gets; and therefore the less likely are the *Länder* to avail themselves of its services.

A report that has now been made public has caused something of a shock, but it should hardly be a surprise: it is that, in a competition between special units to test their operational effectiveness, GSG 9 came last.

Units are organised somewhat differently from *Land* to *Land*. In Baden-Württemberg, for example, it is stationed in Göppingen and its members are selected from the ranks of the uniformed police. There are five specialist groups within the unit. One is trained for the most difficult tasks, such as acting as snipers against hostage takers. Selection involves various qualities such as mental stamina as well as shooting ability.

There are more applicants than positions, so that selection criteria is strict. Officers must be 23 years of age and already have several years experience.



Ready, able and willing, but no one wants us.

(Photo: Poly-Press)

The they first do a six-month course in basic training. Then they spend two days a week on advanced training courses. At 35 years of age, they are retired back to their original units.

Many specialist capabilities are called for: there are explosives experts, parachute jumpers, boat experts. The collective expertise is designed to prepare units for all sorts of operation.

In Baden-Württemberg, there is also a series of six *Mobile Einsatzkommandos* (mobile operations units) the members of which are recruited from the criminal police (the BKA, equivalent to the FBI or the CID).

These are mainly for the under-cover campaign against drug dealers and terrorists, but their training is versatile enough to take on heavily armed criminals in other spheres.

Which units are called upon depends on time: if there is enough time, the anti-terror unit will be called up; if not the mobile forces are constantly available within the *Land* for a shock operation.

While these special units are to a certain extent freed from more routine matters when they are needed for operations, there is also a special commission which comes together during a major operation such as hostage taking. The commission comprises up to 80 members who are pulled off other work.

Commission members comprise, among others, members of negotiating groups, of which there are several in Baden-Württemberg. The five or six members of each group are especially skilled in conversation techniques and aspects of psychology. Their aim is to establish contact with criminals and maintain it.

An operations commander, always a senior officer, leads the operations of special units. He decides on their deployment and how: if, for example, they should shoot to kill.

The final details of when and how must in the end be decided by the unit on the spot. The operations commander keeps in touch with the *Land* Ministry of the Interior so that if the situation worsens dramatically, control can pass to it.

Stefan Geiger

(Stuttgarter Zeitung, 27 August 1988)

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to handle it or restricted public access. In November last year, they refused to handle the women's magazine, *Emma*, which used some particularly horrific photographs not for prurient reasons, but to illustrate an anti-porn campaign.

The same month, *Tempo* was temporarily sold only under the counter in Bavaria because of a report about the pornography industry. On that occasion, too, lawyer Auer played a significant role.

Editor Peichl sees in the episodes a threat to the freedom of the Press: "It is a dangerous development when a lawyer advises more than 20 of the 80 big distributors in the entire country to censor publications before any intervention by the state."

It is possible that the actions are the result more of revised legal procedures and inappropriate legal practice rather than the high-handed actions of a lawyer obsessed with censorship.

Wolfgang Auer himself says that "personally speaking" he finds the mutilation of the *Tempo* edition as "a shame."

He says he knows that this sort of action does shrink the freedom of the Press: "We discovered that 20 years ago" (a reference to the *Spiegel* affair in which the office of the weekly magazine were raided by police).

On the other side, his customers had found that, although both they and a magazine's producers were both theoretically liable for prosecution, the reality was that a publisher was only rarely prosecuted. It was the distributor and sometimes even individual bookshops or even newspaper kiosks who were, in practice, prosecuted.

He said the big publishers were not only better able to defend themselves, but all their copies of the offending publication were usually sold long before the wheels of justice began to act.

Hans Flocken is the manager of Presse-Vertrieb Trunk, the second biggest periodical distributor in Bavaria. He says: "We're the anvil. Everybody hammers on us."

Flocken has three times been involved in protracted legal disputes "because of some sort of sex argy bargy." He has been convicted of "distributing obscene publications."

He recalls with irritation: "For years, we distribute *Die Zeit* and *Süddeutscher Zeitung* (both respected broadsheets) and then I have to go along and make a statement because of all this."

In Bavaria, it is a fate that could, he says, hit anyone: "You get the wife of some politician or other, and she gets all up in arms when she sees something at a kiosk; then, no one tells me anything and it goes to the justice. The next thing I get a summons."

So, on the express recommendation of a judge, his organisation seeks regular legal advice. The recommendations of Auer are distributed by teleprinter to the distributors, who have banded themselves together.

Following the action against *Tempo*, Flocken wants to end the arrangement of getting advice in advance. He says: "The justice have not done anything to us." And the ripped-out pages of *Tempo* was "stupid." A restriction on circulation would have been enough.

But the end of the affair is not yet in sight: a case against *Tempo* laid by the youth protection authority in Frankfurt is now being considered by the office which deals with publications that might be harmful to youth, the *Bundesprüfstelle für Jugendgefährdende Schriften*.

Rudolf Stefen, the head of the *Bundesprüfstelle*, says he understands the fears of the distributors. He says, craftily: "It's the same all over the world — the weakest are always the easiest to hit."

It is now not only the distributors who want to be released from responsibility for the papers they distribute.

Alfred Gerschel, legal adviser to the German Journalists Association, says that politicians need to tackle the problem.

Basically, "It is not the job of the distributors to poke their nose into the (moral rights and wrongs of the) Press."

Giovanni di Lorenzo

(Süddeutsche Zeitung, Munich, 27 August 1988)